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He seated himself upon the trunk, and his father sat down for a few moments by his side.—p. 46.

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Independence: True and False.

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# Independence :

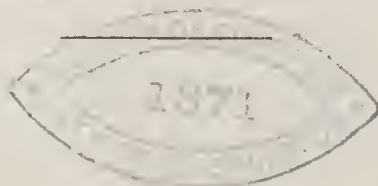
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TRUE AND FALSE.



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WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND REVISED BY THE  
COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.



Philadelphia:

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

No. 316 CHESTNUT STREET.

NEW YORK: No. 147 NASSAU ST. . . . . BOSTON: No. 9 CORNHILL.

LOUISVILLE: No. 103 FOURTH ST.




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## N O T E.

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IN our country, the blessings of civil and religious freedom are enjoyed in a measure not before known in any country of the world.

The only restraint on the perfect liberty of every citizen is that which is imposed by wholesome laws—laws which are absolutely necessary to secure the highest happiness of the largest number. Due subordination to these laws is consistent with the truest independence.

If our institutions have their fair influence in moulding the habits and ruling the conduct of men, diligence in one's calling will be rewarded with competency and respectability.

In our country, no honest, frugal, temperate man, in ordinary health, needs to be dependent on others for his daily food.

The following pages are designed to illustrate the great principle, that (under the providential government of God) *men make or mar their own fortunes*. Adverse circumstances, courageously met, may be turned to good account; and a right use of *dependence* will be found the surest means of securing true *independence*.

# Independence: True and False.

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## CHAPTER I.

INDEPENDENCE! Where is the American boy whose eye does not brighten, and whose cheek does not glow at the sound, or whose bosom has not swelled as the merry peal of the bells, the floating banners, the lively music and the booming cannon, proclaim aloud on each returning anniversary the story of his country's declaration of its inalienable right to be free? Yes: independence is the proud heritage of every one who claims an American parentage.

Yet there are many boys, and some men, too, who have altogether mistaken notions as to what constitutes true independence. To aid in discriminating between the true and the false will be the object of this simple tale.

But a few years ago, the tall grass waved

over broad prairies of the West, and the wild deer bounded through forests where now cultivated fields and comfortable farm houses, great barns filled with the plentiful fruits of the soil, and towns and villages with busy crowds, tell of the industry and enterprise of its inhabitants.

These luxuriant prairies and wide untrodden forests of the West, tempted many of the well-settled people of eastern cities and towns to leave their snug and comfortable homes, and try their fortunes where ample sources of wealth seemed scattered so profusely.

Living in a quiet street in one of the smaller, though by no means the least pleasant of these cities, was a family of the name of Summer-ville. They had lived many years there, and all the attachments that bind the heart to home were in full force. But Mr. Summerville, though he had always procured a comfortable support for his family, possessed nothing beyond his daily earnings. As his children grew up around him, he thought anxiously every day of their future welfare, and the care that pressed most heavily upon him was their education. He was a man who appreciated the advantages of good learning, and he often said that though he could never leave his children a cent's worth

of property, yet if he might see them well educated he should be content. By being well educated, he did not mean that they should have the advantages of schools, and become proficient in the knowledge of books, but that in addition to this they should understand how to take care of themselves; and, above all, that their minds should be well fortified with correct principles, and their hearts filled with that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.

Richard, the oldest, was but thirteen; and his father could not bear the thought that, at most, in three or four years, he must be removed from under his watchful care, and perhaps be surrounded with influences such as he would most earnestly deprecate, in order to prepare himself to earn his own livelihood. Mr. Summerville had seen a good deal of the world, (at least the working portion of it,) and it had been his lot to witness and deplore the situation of apprentices. He had often seen a fine and promising youth placed by his parents under the care of persons, who (as they firmly believed) would exercise the best influence over him, but from neglect, or a want of that care which only parental affection can bestow, led to



wander away from the paths of truth; and he knew that this might be the case with his own Richard, as he might be obliged to put him in just such a situation. Two little girls, younger than Richard, were dependent upon him, and poverty is a hard master.

So Mr. Summerville resolved to go "out West," in search of that competency which a crowded city gave him but little hope of obtaining. The excitement of something new is always enough to make the eyes of children sparkle, and their cheeks glow with pleasure. For Richard and his two sisters, there were no sorrowful leave-takings, but buzzing about like bees in the midst of the confusion of breaking up and selling and packing they seemed like bees also, to sip sweets from every thing they touched. Their bright faces and cheerful tones helped not a little to keep up the spirits of their parents, as, with many sorrows for what they were leaving and many anxious forebodings as to what they were to find, they made preparations for their departure.

It was before the days of railroads, and the family thought themselves surrounded with every possible comfort for travellers, when, with boxes and trunks all closely packed and nailed



or locked, they found themselves on board a canal boat, bound for a week's voyage on the Erie Canal. A canal boat, though it has fallen into some disrepute since people have learned to fly, is, after all, a famous place for forming acquaintances; and, therefore, during this tedious week, we must become as familiar as possible with the Summerville family, and especially with Richard, as he is to be the principal subject of our narrative; and also, as by becoming acquainted with him, we shall learn much of his parents,—for he had been the subject of the most careful parental training.

Richard was not a tall, finely formed lad, with a noble countenance and a flashing eye, as story-tellers are wont to describe all good boys, but he was just such a looking boy as may be seen any day. Rather small of his age, and with a down-cast expression of modesty in his face, he might easily escape notice; yet there was in his face and in his bearing that beauty and nobility which goodness and energy of character may give to the plainest features. There was a gleam of intelligence in his eye, a smile upon his lip, and an activity in his manner when there was any thing to be done, which showed him to be a good, and we may say, a noble boy.

He was naturally very passionate, but his parents had taught him the necessity of restraining his temper, and had also directed him to the only true source of strength for the accomplishment of this task. He had struggled hard with his passions, and if he was now gentle, and amiable and kind, it was not because nature had made him so, but because he had received grace to become so.

His two sisters, Margaret and Anna, or Maggie and Nannie, as they were generally called, were the special objects of his affection. Three children could hardly be found who loved one another more tenderly than they.

The family had gone to the boat at night, after a weary day of toil, and had retired very soon to their berths. Little Nannie hardly knew whether to laugh or cry when her mother lifted her up to the "top shelf," as she called it. It seemed to her a very curious place to sleep, and how many times she raised her head and peeped over to see Maggie below, and her mother still below Maggie, it would be difficult to tell. The tramping of men, and the banging about of boxes and barrels, ropes and poles over her head, made her start often at first, but soon all noises were alike to her ear, and

Nannie slept as soundly as if in her own bed.

Mrs. Summerville could not sleep. Her mind was filled with regrets for the many friends she was leaving, and with anxiety for the future; and not a few tears fell upon her pillow before she found the sweet refreshment of sleep. After awhile she sunk into a slumber, from which she was very often awakened through the night by the disturbances about the boat, which had started an hour or two after they came on board.

In another apartment, separated by a curtain from the one in which his mother and sisters slept, was Richard. He was a little too old to be much disturbed by the strangeness of the scene about him, and one might suppose he was too young to be troubled with anxious thoughts; but it was not so. He had eagerly listened to every word his father had spoken in his presence about the place to which they were going, and his mind was full to overflowing of his own plans. He had never been on a farm, and therefore it need not be a matter of wonder if his thoughts about reaping, and sowing and plowing, came in reversed order as often as otherwise. But plans he had, and many of

them, too; and half the night he lay awake, revolving them over and over, discarding one and taking up another, till at length, upon the strength of the one good resolution to do all he could to help his father, he fell asleep.

Early in the morning the family met on the deck of the boat. They had travelled some miles in the course of the night, and found themselves in the midst of new scenery. Richard drew his sisters away to another part of the boat, to point out to them a snug farmhouse, surrounded with trees and orchards.

“There, Maggie!” said he: “it’s in such a kind of place we are going to live. See that great barn there! Would’nt you like father to have such a barn, all full of wheat, and all his own? And you, Maggie, shall have just such a little colt as that for yours. And Nannie, do you see the lambs? You shall have one to dress up with flowers—you shall, Nannie! I’ll get you one!” And Richard was quite excited by the pleasing picture.

Maggie looked somewhat distrustful.

“Don’t you believe it, Maggie?” said Richard, eagerly. “You look very sober about it.”

“I don’t know, Richard,” said she. “I

can't help looking sober when mother does. I looked over the edge of my bed this morning, and I do believe she had been crying. What makes her feel so bad, Richard? Don't she want to go out West?"

"Yes, she wants to go, I know, for I heard her say so to father. But I suppose she felt bad about leaving. We must try to make her happy. Look there, Maggie—there's another farm on her side of the boat. Let's go and talk to her about it." So he bounded to his mother's side, exclaiming:—"Look, mother! won't it be pleasant to live in such a place! Look at the trees all full of fruit, and see the milk-pans all out in the sun. They must have plenty of cows there."

Mrs. Summerville smiled at Richard's eagerness. "It will be many years, my son," she replied, "before we have things as comfortable as they have them there."

"Why," he exclaimed with surprise, "are we not going to live on a farm? And isn't every thing in comfortable order? Did't Mr. Murray tell you so, father?"

"Yes, Richard; but you will find that comfort at the West is a very different thing from



comfort at the East. Haven't I told you you would find every thing different?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, hesitatingly,—“but yet”——

“But what, my son? If people can get a log cabin that will keep the rain off, and food enough to live on the first winter, they think they are quite comfortable. Does that frighten you? Do you expect to find every thing made ready to your hand?"

“No, father; I'm not afraid for myself; but I don't like to think of mother's living so.”

“Your mother understands the privations she will have to endure much better than you do, and it is for the sake of you and your sisters, that she is willing to endure them. But you and I will try to make them as light as possible. Won't we, my son?"

“Yes, that we will!” exclaimed Richard, drawing himself up. “I only wish I was a man grown.”

“That is an idle wish, my son. You know I have always told you the only way to be independent of circumstances is to control them. If you do not control them you may be sure they will control you. You can't make yourself a man at once, but you need'nt sit idle for all

that. You can make the most of yourself while you are a boy."

"I'll try," said Richard, walking thoughtfully away. "Independent of circumstances!" he exclaimed to Maggie, who soon joined him. "Father has talked so much to me about that. You see, Maggie, it won't do to give up if things don't go to suit us. We must wait patiently till they come right. If we can't do one thing we can do another, that's all."

"Yes, Richard: I was thinking this morning how much I could do to help mother, when we get out there. But what father has said, makes me think I don't know any thing about what we shall have to do."

"It makes me feel bad to see mother look so," said Richard, thoughtfully. "But there's something for me to do now," he added, brightening up. "I mustn't grow dull and feel badly because things look gloomy. That's just what father means by controlling circumstances. I wonder I didn't think of that before. Come, Maggie, there's a chance to try what we can do to make things appear more cheerful."

So he took Maggie's hand, and in a moment they were beside their mother, who had gone below to get some work. Richard saw her en-



deavouring to extricate her work-basket from beneath a pile of shawls and sundry other articles which had been heaped upon it. He sprung forward to assist her, and was rewarded by her own sweet smile. He then sat down beside her, and talked in a lively way till the cloud passed from his mother's brow, and she looked happy.

How many boys, instead of trying to be cheerful and to restore cheerfulness at such a time, would have sulkily yielded to a fit of ill-humour, and so increased the gloom!

"Mother," said he, at length, "how can we get along without family worship morning and evening? I know we should all feel happier, and do better, if we could have it, as we did at home."

"I am glad you miss it, my son," said his mother. "It seems strange to be without it, but we can seek strength from our heavenly Father, each one apart, if we cannot do it together. I hope you will not forget that!"

"No, mother, I hope not. Father has always told me that if I try to get along without help from God, I shall fail."

"Yes, it is folly to try to be independent of Him in whom we live and move and have our

being. You remember what the Saviour says, 'Without me ye can do nothing.'"

"I thought of that this morning, mother. I found I was beginning to feel badly after what father had said about the way we shall have to live out West. But then I remembered what he has told me so often about all things being under the control of God."

"Can you always feel glad that it is so, my son?"

"Why, no—not always,—at first. But then it is because I have a sinful heart that does not like to be controlled by God, and he says that I must ask for the Holy Spirit to subdue it."

"Are you willing God should do with us as He sees best?"

"I think so,—at least I will try to be willing."

This conversation, to which the little girls were listeners, was carried on in a low tone in a part of the cabin somewhat removed from the rest of the passengers. It may serve as a specimen of the manner in which Mr. and Mrs. Summerville had always endeavoured to impress upon the minds of their children a sense of their dependence upon God's providence in the most common circumstances of life, and upon His grace in the control of their own hearts.

Nothing was so pleasant either to the parents or the children, as these “good talks” which they often had together, and the parents had the happiness of seeing the good effect of this kind of instruction, especially upon the mind of Richard, who was now old enough to understand its meaning, and feel its benefit. Any person unacquainted with the manner in which he had been trained, might have been surprised at the intelligence of his answers; but children, with whom the truths of the Bible are made the subject of constant conversation, often have a simple and clear understanding of them, which, to those who have begun later in life to study them, seems to be scarcely possible.

It is needless to dwell minutely upon the journey of the Summerville family westward. The time passed slowly away, and the canal boat was exchanged for the lake steamboat,—not one of those floating palaces that now waft you over the beautiful waters of Lake Erie almost between sunrise and sunset. It was a small and dirty craft, which might be thirty-six hours in its tedious passage. But it was a pleasant change from the canal boat after all, and the children were delighted and amazed at the wide, clear and beautiful expanse of water.

But when the lake was passed, they began to feel that they were getting into the western world in reality. They found themselves upon the shores of the shallow and sluggish Maumee River. The conveyances, among which travellers might choose to carry them farther westward, were of a strange and comfortless kind. The only one that afforded the least semblance of a shelter overhead, was a miserable boat used chiefly for carrying freight up and down the river. Here they met with two other families, who were also going west in search of a new home. These, with their own number, so crowded the boat, that their condition was comfortless in the extreme. It was hard to keep up cheerfulness of spirits under such circumstances, but generally they did succeed in doing so. After travelling a day or two, the boat was drawn up one night, as usual, to the side of the stream, and made fast while the passengers went on shore in search of a lodging place.

Did you ever see a log cabin? If you have lived in the West, you have seen many; but if, like the Summervilles, you have lived always in the more populous parts of the East, you may never have seen one. It was a strange sight to Richard and his two sisters. They had been

much pleased with their novel mode of passing up the river, and with the new and strange scenery along its banks. Reared upon the shores of the beautiful Hudson, and accustomed from childhood to look down from the heights which almost throughout its whole extent rise so beautifully from its margin, it was a new thing to see a wide stream of water rolling along for miles and miles, with rocks almost everywhere jutting up from beneath its sluggish waters, and to hear daily the grating of their boat upon the hard and rough bed of the stream, though it seemed almost to lie upon the surface of the water.

And then, as the boat neared the shore, to snatch off leaves and twigs from the trees that hung over the stream, and sometimes to look off into the thicket that grew along the river, and see the water standing in black and swampy pools among the thick stems of the shrubs, almost made them think the river had no banks. There was a pleasing novelty about all this. But then, after the boat was fastened, and the travellers had made their way up from the river bank to the road, and they saw before them the rough and crooked rail fence that surrounded the fields, and the unsightly building



with its rude chimney made of sticks and then plastered over with mud, they began to think that the novelty was not altogether pleasing. A rude gate admitted them into the garden, and along both sides of the path were lying the brown and shrivelled cucumber vines, and huge yellow cucumbers were scattered all about.

They entered the house, where at one end of the room, an enormous fire-place stretched nearly across the house, and its black and gaping throat was the very picture of discomfort. Mr. and Mrs. Summerville were prepared for these things, and were not taken by surprise when told that they might sleep on the floor of the one room, which was at once kitchen, dining room, parlour, bedroom, pantry, cellar, and all.

Maggie was a thoughtful child,—thoughtful beyond her years. She sat down upon a rickety chair in a corner of the room, and gazed around her. She felt such a sense of discomfort and loneliness as she never felt before. The open door was near her, and stealing quietly out, she looked around in search of some cheerful and pleasant object. Right before her was the crooked path leading down to the rough gate; and on either side of the path were the dead, straggling vines, and beyond were cabbages and

potatoes, and other garden vegetables ; while still farther on in the corners of the fence, tall, coarse grass, and rank weeds running up to seed, filled out the picture ; and Maggie buried her face in her apron and cried !

“ Why, Maggie dear, what is the matter ? ” said Richard, springing from the door where he had been watching her, and throwing his arm around her.

“ Oh, Richard ! ” she sobbed, “ will we have to live in such a house as this, and have such fences ? Every thing is as ugly as it can be. ”

“ Is that all the trouble ? ” said he, putting on his manliest look, “ just leave all that to father and me. ”

“ But father said we should live in a log cabin, ” said Maggie.

“ Well, I suppose we will ; but we’ll soon fix it up better than this. Why, Maggie, would you have these old cucumbers lying about here if this was our place ? ” he asked, — spurning one of them with his foot.

“ No, indeed ! I’d soon have pretty flowers all along here, and I’d pull up these weeds and this old grass, and I’d have some vines about the house. Oh, Richard ! how nicely they would climb up the corners where the ends of

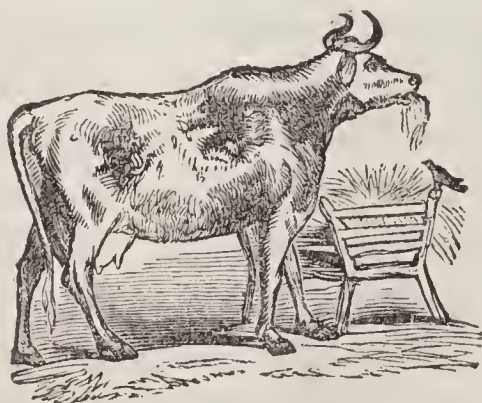


the logs stick out so," said she, laughing in spite of her tears.

"And do you think you'd do it all, and father and I could do nothing?"

"No, indeed—no, Richard. I know you would not let things look as they do here. Oh, but won't we all work and fix them up nicely."

"Don't you know, Maggie, what father has told us so often? I've got that lesson by heart. If I could only practise it as well as I can say it, I should do well enough. And let's both remember it, Maggie. The only way to be independent of circumstances, is to control them; and if we don't, they will surely control us."



## CHAPTER II.

WE left our friends in a log cabin,—the first they had ever seen,—and we shall find them again in a log cabin, one with which they are likely to become pretty well acquainted. A week more of travelling had brought them to the village near which their place of residence lay—about seven miles distant. From the village, they had been brought by wagons, and left to take care of themselves.

Mr. Summerville, as has been before remarked, possessed nothing beyond his daily earnings, so that the farm to which he was going was not his own. He had met with a man, before leaving his home in the East, who owned a farm in the West, for which he was anxious to secure a good tenant. This farm, he represented to Mr. Summerville as a very valuable piece of property, partly improved, and with comfortable buildings upon it. Mr. Summerville had considered himself peculiarly

fortunate in meeting with so good a prospect of a favourable location for his family, and the hope which was held out to him; that in a few years he would be enabled to make the property his own, had been one of the greatest inducements to him, to try his fortune in the West.

Great indeed was his disappointment on reaching the place of his destination, to find a miserable, neglected farm, much of which was still covered with its native growth of timber; its fences thrown down, and every appearance of disorder and neglect in every part. The house which had been represented to him as comfortable, he found to be a miserable log cabin, less desirable for a shelter than many a barn he had seen. From end to end, and from floor to roof, it was one bare, forbidding room. The windows and doors were gone, and between the logs and through many a crevice in the roof, the light streamed without obstruction.

Knowing that the place had been for some time uninhabited, they had bought sufficient provision for a short time, at the neighbouring town. They had not been long in their new abode before night came on; and, after partaking of their simple meal, which was spread

on one of their unopened boxes of furniture, they began to prepare for rest. Beds and bedding were unpacked, quilts and blankets were hung before the door and the windows, and their beds were spread on the floor.

The children had been longing for the time when they could again have their accustomed family worship; and this evening, as the family were for the first time alone, they could once more kneel around their own altar, to pray for the protection and guidance of the Almighty. Seating themselves close together, they listened devoutly to the word of God, as read from a pocket Testament which Mr. Summerville always carried with him, and then they kneeled down and prayed together. They needed to pray, and they all felt it to be a privilege.

They then sought rest. But it was long before the parents could compose themselves to sleep. They had come so far away from all the endearing associations of home to obtain comfort and the means of education for their children, and this was the result! But Mr. Summerville was not the man to give up, even under such circumstances, and the cause of his wakefulness was not so much disappointment

and solicitude, as the forming of plans for the improvement of their present condition.

The little girls were soon asleep, but poor Richard was not. His heart failed him entirely. He lay upon his pillow and tossed and rolled, but all to no purpose. All his expectations and plans were at once thrown into confusion; and, between wondering what would become of them and indignation against Mr. Murray, he became so bewildered and unhappy that he cried. If it had been in the daytime, he would doubtless have been ashamed of doing so unmanly a thing; but he actually did cry.

In the morning, things looked still more dreary and desolate. But Richard sprang from his bed and soon had a bright fire burning out of doors, where they had made one the evening before, and the tea-kettle swinging over it. He had often read about "camping out," and his knowledge of the way in which people get along in those circumstances came into service now; for their house was little better than a tent, and as for conveniences, it was as barren of them as it could well be.

But Mr. Summerville tore open another box, and a white cloth was soon spread over their temporary table, and a few dishes were



placed upon it; and, as the family gathered around it to eat their morning meal, and Mr. Summerville thanked God that his mercies were still continued to them, Richard began to think that, after all, they had much more than they deserved.

When they had united in seeking grace and direction for the day, Mr. Summerville set about making their habitation more comfortable. He had brought with him a good assortment of tools, and he had skill to use them. Not many hours had passed before he had constructed a tolerable door out of some loose boards, and Richard, during that time, had prepared some mud, as he could see this was the way in which things had been done before, and had plastered up the openings between the logs. Meanwhile, Mrs. Summerville and the little girls had been busy within. Mrs. Summerville had always lived in a city, and lived comfortably; too, and, at first, it had seemed to her a hopeless task to make so cheerless a place look home-like. But she made a beginning by washing the rough floor, and then she arranged about the room the most necessary of the articles of furniture they had brought with them, and hung some long white

curtains where the windows should have been ; so that by the time Mr. Summerville and Richard came in from their out-door work, it really began to look as if they might, after a while, be comfortable even there. The table was spread in the middle of the floor, and chairs placed around it ; and they seated themselves at their meal, looking much more cheerful than they did in the morning.

There is nothing that will so soon drive away melancholy as work, and they had all been proving the truth of this saying. Before night, the crevices in the roof had been covered with shingles, or something, at least, that answered the purpose of shingles, torn from an old shed ; and when the family assembled in the evening, they looked around with no small degree of satisfaction as they contrasted their condition with that of the evening before, and they were all in good spirits.

The next morning, Mr. Summerville and Richard went to a little settlement about four miles from them, to get some articles of convenience which they could not make for themselves, and, among others, sashes for the windows. They had no horses yet, and therefore there was no way for them but to go on foot.

This would be nothing to people that were accustomed to it, but to Richard it was quite a formidable undertaking. He had thought when he went half a mile to school in the city where they had lived, that he had a very long walk, and now to think of travelling four miles and back the same day, seemed a great thing. But it afforded him and his father ample time for conversation, and they improved it well.

Richard at first walked thoughtfully along, scarcely speaking, until at length his father asked:—"What are you thinking of, Richard?"

"Oh, about this queer way of living!" he replied.

"Why, what is there queer about it?" asked Mr. Summerville.

"Every thing, I'm sure," replied Richard. "Every thing is as different as it can be from what we have been used to."

"That is very true: but how do you like it?"

"I can't tell yet. I haven't made up my mind."

"Well, it is not best to judge hastily—but how do you like it so far?"

"I don't care for myself, but I've been thinking how mother and the girls can live so."

"I'm glad you think first of them, my son,"



replied Mr. Summerville, "and I suppose I may understand from your answer that you don't like the appearance of things much yet."

"Well, I don't," said Richard, "to speak candidly."

"I don't, either," replied Mr. Summerville.

Richard looked up with an expression of surprise. "Don't you like it, father?" he asked. "Why, you seemed so cheerful, I thought you did."

"It would not make matters any better to be gloomy and mopish, would it?" said Mr. Summerville, smiling.

"No; but then how can it be helped? It is such a disappointment to find things so different from what we expected."

"Yes, it is a very great disappointment, and on account of your mother and the children, I feel it very much; and, without my Bible, and without prayer, I should be ready to sink into despondency. But suppose I should spend all day reading the Bible and praying, would that help us along with our difficulties?"

"Oh, no; there is work to be done, too," said Richard.

"Yes; and after I have sought strength from God by prayer, and by meditation on his

word, I must then try to do all I can to improve our situation, must I not?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Well, then, there is another thing that I fear you will overlook, and that is, that we should try to understand why God has disappointed our hopes, and placed us in a situation that appeared so undesirable?"

Richard looked somewhat startled by this last remark, and turning his eyes thoughtfully on the ground, he walked along some distance in silence. Perhaps it had not come into his mind before, that it was God who had done this, or if it had, he had been very much at a loss to understand the reason of his dealing thus with them.

Mr. Summerville at length asked:—"Is not that an important question for you to consider?"

"Yes, sir; but I should not know how to answer it," said Richard.

"I don't know that I understand it, either," said his father, "and I'm sure I don't fully—but I think I can see some of his reasons. You know, Richard, that all things that happen to us in this life are of very small importance when compared with the things of eternity. If I should never be able to do what I wish to do

for you and your sisters, and what I came here with the hope of doing, yet if God's dealings should be such as to fit us better for the kingdom of heaven, should we be losers or gainers?"

"Gainers, of course," said Richard.

"That is what I want you to feel."

"But then, father," said Richard, "I don't see why, if God sees fit, we might not have been just as ready for heaven without such disappointments."

"But perhaps, if you study the providence of God, you may be able to see."

"Well, father, please tell me what you think is the reason we have been so disappointed."

"I don't know that I can tell the reason. This is one of the secret things that belong to God. But I may be able to learn some lessons from it. And in the first place I may learn to remember how uncertain every thing is upon earth."

"But then, we know that already. We never feel sure of any thing till it comes to pass."

"I know we always say every thing is uncertain, but we don't feel it deeply enough. When

something fails to be realized upon which we confidently depended, and upon which we have built strong hopes, then we are made to feel it. But this feeling will be of little service, unless we learn to look away from the world, and remember that we may depend with perfect confidence upon heavenly things, and they will never disappoint us. If we learn this lesson well, it will make us more diligent in seeking to realize and enjoy (even while we are here) the inheritance we have above."

"That will be a good lesson for me, if I only learn it well."

"But that is not the only lesson that we may learn from our present circumstances. We must learn also, dependence upon God, and seek submission to his will. Don't you know he could just as easily have given us a pleasant home as not?"

"Yes, father, if it had been best for us."

"So we must remember, while we try to improve our situation, that we are entirely dependent upon God, and that he can destroy us, or build us up, as he sees fit."

"Well, father, I don't wonder you are cheerful," said Richard. "I wish I understood these things as well as you do."



“You must think upon them, and now fix them well in your mind. First of all, read your Bible, and seek wisdom from God. The truths of the Bible are just as precious here as elsewhere, and prayer is just as effectual. Try also, always to understand God’s dealings with you, and study his providence by the light of the Scriptures, and with prayer. And then, when you have thus tried to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, try as well as you can to make things comfortable and pleasant around you. Never give up for a moment because you don’t find things ready to your hand, but remember the maxim I have so often repeated to you. Though it is true that we are entirely in the hands of God, and dependent on him for grace and strength to do his will, yet it is in an important sense equally true that we can render ourselves independent of circumstances, by controlling them.”

Their conversation was interrupted by meeting a train of movers. As the motley assemblage passed by, some huddled into wagons with household stuff of all sorts and some plodding along on foot, several profane words caught the ear of Mr. Summerville and his son,

and a double force was added to the instruction he had been endeavouring to convey to Richard's mind, by the contrast afforded by these persons who were calling down curses upon themselves, and upon whose unblest home, wherever they might find it, the cheering and sanctifying influence they felt in their own humble abode would not descend.

They passed on to the village, where they procured the articles they wished, and then returned home. They found various changes had taken place during their absence. The rough and unsightly logs were covered within with newspapers which Mrs. Summerville had neatly pasted upon them; and, when the windows were put in their places, the room looked quite cheerful, though it required no small amount of labour and ingenuity to make them fit, as the only window-sashes Mr. Summerville had been able to procure were some which had been removed from an old building which was to be fitted up anew, and they were several inches smaller than his window-frames!

A small fire was blazing upon the hearth, and the light danced and flickered as merrily as if it had shone upon gilded walls and



elegant furniture, and the faces upon which it fell were quite as bright as if every thing around them had been all they could have wished.



## CHAPTER III.

WE cannot note all the improvements that were made in the log cabin where our friends reside. We will be content with saying that at the end of a fortnight, the house and yard around it had undergone such a transformation that it would have been difficult to recognise in it the desolate and deserted looking place that the Summervilles had found. It had been by hard toil that the change was wrought, but those whose business it was, had not shrunk from putting their hands to the labour.

Mr. Summerville and Richard had repaired the fence that surrounded the house, and removed all the rubbish from the inclosure; and they had also made some changes within. A floor had been laid upon the logs that stretched from side to side over head, and a partition had been made, dividing the house into two rooms. The boards were rough, to be sure, but they had already learned that it would not do to be too particular. They had also repaired the

rough and broken floor, and it was now covered with a carpet, the coarsest which Mrs. Summer-ville had brought with her. Richard had been of the greatest service to his mother. He had turned his hand to a variety of employments, such as he never thought of before, and had in this way contributed in no small degree to the general comfort of the family.

Richard, although he had at times entertained a wavering hope, had never ventured to consider himself a real Christian. But religious instruction had been interwoven with every event of his life, and had become so entwined with his thoughts, that not a day passed in which reflections upon the great things of the soul and eternity were not suggested to his mind by the various changes which occurred. He reflected much upon the conversation he had with his father on their way to the village, and many thoughts came into his mind in consequence of it.

He had been taught from his early childhood always to read a portion of Scripture daily, and to offer prayer to God, and this duty now seemed enforced by every circumstance around him. He remembered his father's remark, that without the Bible and without prayer, he should be ready to sink into despondency ; and he thought

if his father needed these things to help him, how much more did he need them. He always found that his reading a portion of Scripture in the morning, and then lifting his heart in prayer to God, was the greatest safeguard to him through the day. It made all his little troubles and annoyances seem light, to think of the far superior interests of eternity. He endeavoured, also, to remember what his father had told him about studying God's providences, and every day he was seeking to learn some new lesson from them.

After they had been about two weeks in their new abode, and were quite comfortably arranged about the house, Mr. Summerville and Richard prepared to begin the out-door work. There was much to be done before winter set in.

It was already planned, and the first thing to be done was to repair the broken fences. They went to the woods, and the vigorous strokes of their axes soon rung through the air, and it was not long before a sturdy tree was lying prostrate. Richard had never been accustomed to hard labour, and by the time the tree was felled, he was pretty tired. He seated himself upon the trunk, and his father sat down for a few moments by his side. His thoughts



soon turned into the channel to which they had been directed by their former conversation. After a while he said:—"Father, I think there is another lesson I might learn from the way we have been dealt with."

"What is that, my son?"

"To make myself more useful than I have ever been before. I never imagined there were so many things I could do to help you and mother. I don't do much, to be sure," he continued, dropping his head, "but I believe I am beginning to learn to do some things."

"That is a valuable lesson, Richard," replied Mr. Summerville, with a smile of approbation. "You must learn not to live for yourself alone."

"I am afraid I should never have learned that in our old house, father. It seems to me if we had stayed there, I should just have gone on studying, and I'm afraid I should have been selfish about it all. But here I can't do any thing for myself, and I am compelled to think about others. I can't help it," said he, laughing.

"You then can see the wisdom of God, my son. If I had desired to teach you that lesson, I might have tried many ways, and might have failed at last. But as you say, God can place

us where we cannot help learning what he wishes us to learn, unless we are shamefully dull or obstinate."

"And yet we don't learn sometimes," said Richard.

"We shall not learn properly unless we seek for God's Spirit to teach us. I hope you do not forget that."

"No; I do not forget to ask,—but I am sometimes afraid I do not ask properly, because I do so many wrong things."

"That must teach you still more deeply your dependence upon God. Without him you might as well undertake to build a palace where our cabin stands as to train your soul for his service."

"But, father, it was so mean in Mr. Murray to deceive you so much about this place. It makes me angry to think of it," said Richard, and his face flushed as he spoke.

"It was certainly very wrong, but be careful that you do not allow sinful feelings to overcome you on account of it. Whenever you think of it, remember that, however unjust he may have been, it was all under the control of God, and the evil may be overruled by Him for our greatest good."



“Yes : but to think of your having to work so hard as you will to get things in order here, and all for him, too, when he has served you so meanly.”

“Do you remember what I said to you the other day about the comparative importance of the things of this world, and the concerns of the soul ?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, then, suppose I do have to labour hard, if I learn lessons respecting eternal things, and respecting God’s dealings with me, I shall have no reason to regret it. And do you be careful, my son, that, while you strive by your labour to control these adverse circumstances so as to be independent of them, you do not become the slave of your own passions. You remember the Bible says, ‘Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.’”

Richard did not answer, and his father left him to think of what had been said. It was a habit of Mr. Summerville, in conversing with his children, often to leave a passage of Scripture in their minds, that they might meditate upon it ; and sometimes, when he knew nothing about it, they had been restrained from sin by

the recollection of some such passage. Richard was a thoughtful boy, and it seemed as if he had really grown considerably older very fast during the few weeks that had passed since they left their Eastern home. Mr. Summerville had deeply regretted the necessity of keeping him from school, but he was learning faster than he had ever learned in any school but that of adversity.

After a few minutes Mr. Summerville got up, and taking his axe again, went to work lopping off the branches of the tree. Richard did the same, but while his hands were thus employed, his mind was busy with other things. He had a notion that if he was only energetic, and did not suffer himself to be overpowered by the circumstances around him, he should be doing pretty well. The lesson about being independent of circumstances he was sure he had learned by heart; but he had not quite so fully learned that it was a great deal harder to be independent of himself.

They did not engage in any further conversation, except about their work, during the day. Towards night they returned home. The little

girls ran to meet them, one clinging to the hand of her father, and the other to her brother.

“O, Richard,” said Maggie, eagerly, “what do you think we have found?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied Richard: “you hav’nt found a gold mine, have you?”

“Now, don’t talk so. We have really found something very nice.”

“Well, what is it?”

“Oh, a great bundle of flower seeds! Nannie and I were playing out in the shed, and I saw something in a paper, stuffed away under a log, and I pulled it out and it was full of flower seeds. Oh, I’m so glad somebody saved them! And in the spring, Nannie and I are going to have flowers all along the path, and vines around the house. Oh, it will be so pretty, father! Won’t it?”

“Yes, dear,” said Mr. Summerville, “we shall be very glad to have something of the kind. But what have you been doing all day?”

Maggie repeated over a long list of things she had done, and among others, that she had learned some verses in the Bible, and her mother had talked to her a great deal about them.

By this time they were in the house, where tea was waiting for them, and where the instructions of the day were to be enforced and hallowed by the associations of a Christian home, and cherished by household prayer.





## CHAPTER IV.

THE Summervilles had not been long in their new home, when they found themselves becoming very well acquainted with their neighbours, if neighbours they could be called who were scattered around them at distances from two miles and upward, with the exception of one family, whose farm joined theirs. That freedom and familiarity which are characteristic of Western society, brought them into closer contact with some of these neighbours than they would have desired; and Mr. Summerville was not long in observing the lamentable fact that many who were moral, and indeed outwardly religious in their Eastern homes, became immoral and irreligious when removed from the restraints of more settled society, and the influence of established religious institutions. He found it to be his misfortune that he was surrounded with persons of this class, of whose influence on his children (in con-

sequence of their unrestrained familiarity) he had no little fear.

But that which he especially lamented was the absence of all means of religious instruction. Although in his own family he could partially supply this deficiency, yet he was pained by seeing the half-grown boys and girls of the vicinity, strolling about on the Lord's day, while their parents, he well knew, were either at home, idling away the time, or else engaged in some improper employment.

There were churches and Sunday-schools in the village about seven miles off, but this was much too far to attract those who cared so little for religious instruction as his neighbours. He therefore resolved, as soon as the winter was over, to establish a Sunday-school.

As he and Richard were one day employed about their usual work, Mr. Lee, who occupied the adjoining farm, came along.

"How are you, neighbour?"

Mr. Summerville had just been revolving in his mind his plan of forming a school, and he managed the conversation so as to introduce the subject to his neighbour Lee.

"A Sunday-school! What for?" said Mr. Lee, gruffly.



“Why, to teach our children the Scriptures and the way of eternal life,” replied Mr. Summerville.

“Teach your own children if you want to, but mine ’ll do well enough without,” said Mr. Lee,—turning and walking angrily away.

Richard looked up in amazement. He had never in his life heard any one speak so. His father well understood how irreligious and sinful sentiments soon lose their repulsiveness, even in the view of a well-instructed child, by becoming familiar, and for that reason he had carefully kept his children from conversation with such persons. But as we are always likely to hear more or less of such conversation, it is well we should know there is an effectual preservation against its corrupting influence.

Mr. Lee’s farm was in a very different condition from Mr. Summerville’s, in consequence of his having lived upon it for a number of years, and being possessed of the means necessary for its improvement. He had built a fine, commodious house, and every thing about his premises bore the appearance of ease and wealth. Yet there was a something about the aspect of the farm which Mr. Summerville could not understand. There was a want of that trim and

orderly neatness which are always the outward indications of industry and thrift.

Richard had often heard his father speak in terms of respect of Mr. Lee, and he had himself formed a pleasing acquaintance with his son Walter. It was this that caused him to look up with such astonishment at what Mr. Lee said. And, indeed, Mr. Summerville was not much less surprised. Mr. Lee had always appeared to be of the better class among his neighbours, though Mr. Summerville had never before obtained any knowledge of his religious views; but he had seen this unfavourable sign, that Walter was always out on the Sabbath, wandering about, or fishing, or riding his favourite pony. However, Walter was a very active and strong-headed boy, and Mr. Summerville did not feel certain after all, that his father really allowed him to indulge in these sports on that sacred day, and he had even thought Mr. Lee might be glad of some new and additional influence to restrain him.

Neither he nor Richard spoke for some time; but Mr. Summerville at length perceiving that Richard was expecting him to say something, broke the silence by saying:—"Rather discouraging, isn't it, Richard?"

“I didn’t think Mr. Lee would talk so, father,” replied Richard.

“Nor I. I am quite surprised.”

“I will have no more to do with Walter,” continued Richard :—“that’s certain.”

“I should not wish you to make him an intimate friend,” replied Mr. Summerville. “But you cannot altogether avoid him. And even if you could, you would by no means secure yourself against wicked influences. You know that in order to do that, one must needs go out of the world.”

“Yes ; but then I must try as much as I can, must’nt I ?”

“Yes ; but you have reached an age when your principles and your strength to resist evil must be tried, and perhaps severely. We have guarded you as much as possible from such influences during your childhood, and at the same time we have been trying to fortify you with good principles. The time has come, when you will be called into closer contact with evil, and the strength of your principles must be tried. You will find that your life is beset with difficulties, not only from outward circumstances, but an evil heart. We live in a corrupt world. If you wish to be a good and useful man, you

will have to contend with all these obstacles, and must strive to overcome them all. Remember to be independent not only of circumstances and of your own bad passions, and also of evil companions. It is a hard task, but all these are necessary to constitute true independence of character. Still in every effort you make, remember your entire dependence upon God. Trusting in his guidance as given by his Providence, his word, and his spirit, you may be independent of every thing else."

Richard thought much of this, till at length the idea came into his mind that thinking would never accomplish any thing, unless he acted as well as thought. This reminded him of the circumstance that had been the occasion of his father's instruction, and he suddenly exclaimed:—"Well, father, what is to be done about this Sunday-school?"

"Why, we will see what we can do. If we cannot get the help of the fathers, we will try what we can do with the children."

"Will you?" said Richard, joyfully. "I was afraid we should have to give it up."

"You are easily discouraged."

"Why, to be sure I was," said he, thoughtfully. "When shall I learn to be more hopeful?"



“You may take a lesson next Lord’s day,” replied his father, “and see how far the instruction I have given you will work practically. Principle without practice is worthless, or, to express a similar truth in Bible language, ‘Faith without works is dead.’ ”

Mr. Summerville and Richard took pains, in the course of the week, to notify all the children of the neighbourhood of the proposed school, and at the end of the week it was pretty well known that the children were invited to meet at Mr. Summerville’s house, and when the time came, a considerable number were gathered. Many, it is true, came from mere curiosity, but whatever the motive that brought them there, they heard some Bible truth, and were taught something of their duties and responsibilities.

Walter Lee, of course, was not present at the Sunday-school. He had no encouragement from his parents, and his own inclinations would be far from leading him there. Richard resolved from that time to have nothing more to do with him, but he found it was not so easy to avoid his acquaintance as he had supposed it might be. Walter was one of that large class of boys who have nothing to do. He did not



choose to go to school, and he had still less inclination to work. His father had given him a fine pony, and his principal employment was to ride about, or sometimes to hunt and fish. As is generally the case with such boys, there was much of the time when he felt dissatisfied with himself, and with every person and every thing around him. Scarcely a day passed, in the course of which Richard might not see him galloping past on his pony, and invariably, if Richard's work happened to be near the fence, he would rein up, and enter into conversation. He had too much vanity, ever to think that his company might not be acceptable, and even if he had imagined it, he would have been too wilful to keep out of the way.

On Saturday afternoon of the week following the opening of the Sunday-school, Richard was plowing. He had just turned his horses toward the road, from the more distant side of the field, when Walter came in sight. Richard wished much to avoid meeting him, but he could not, unless he should stop, and remain still till Walter had passed, and that he did not like to do. So he went on, and approached the fence just in time to receive Walter's salutation :—

“Well, Dick, working away, eh?”

“Yes, working away,” Richard rejoined, cheerfully, beginning to turn his horses.

“Don’t be in such a hurry,” said Walter. “Can’t you stop and talk with a fellow a bit? I would’nt work as you do, for nobody!”

A confused mixture of Scripture truth came into Richard’s mind, among which the most conspicuous sentiment was, “If any man will not work, neither shall he eat:” but there was, also, the recollection of the Saviour’s words, “Cast not your pearls before swine,” and he therefore quietly replied:—

“Well, I am willing to work as long as it is necessary. I would like to go to school, if I could,—and may-be I’ll have a chance yet.”

“Work and go to school!” replied Walter, contemptuously. “Why, when do you ever expect to have any fun, if you don’t have it now. I tell father it will be time enough for me to go to work when I get old enough to have something to do for myself.”

“But if I did not work, father would have my share to do and his own too, and this would’nt suit me.”

“Well, it’s no use talking about it; only I

would'nt do it, that's all. But I just stopped to ask you to go fishing with me to-morrow."

"Why, to-morrow is Sunday," exclaimed Richard, with surprise.

"Well, what of that?" asked Walter.

"What of that! Why, did you never learn the commandments?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure, I have heard something about them."

"Heard about them! Did you never learn them?"

"I don't know but I did once. I've most forgot. I believe I'll have to come to your Sunday-school and learn them over again."

"Oh, do!" exclaimed Richard, eagerly, "Now won't you?"

"May-be I will!" replied Walter.

"It's so pleasant," continued Richard, "to study the Bible. We can't go to church here, and it seems so good to have some such employment on the Sabbath."

"Yes, 'tis a kind of a hard day to get along with, unless you take my way. I wonder which is really the best, my way or yours," said Walter, with mock soberness.

Richard did not notice the mischievous twinkle of Walter's eye, but eagerly answered:

“Oh, if you would only try my way, you would soon say it was the best. Won’t you come tomorrow, Walter?”

“But now, Dick, why won’t you try my way?” said Walter.

“Oh, because I know it is wrong. Father has always taught me so, and the Bible says so, and I know it is so.”

A loud laugh from Walter was the first intimation to Richard that his companion had been all the while only trifling with him.

“I thought so! I thought so!” shouted Walter. “Have you no more independence than that? Why don’t you think for yourself, and do what you like, instead of being driven about that way? Prince and I know better,” said he, stroking the neck of his beautiful pony. “Come, Prince, let’s be off!” and away he galloped, leaving Richard in a kind of bewilderment. He stood a moment, gazing after Walter, and then turned his horses into their course, and pursued his work and his thoughts together.

Mr. Summerville was at work in another field, and saw Walter and Richard talking together. When he met his son as they returned from their day’s work, he inquired what had

been the subject of their conversation. Richard repeated as much as he could recall, and then after some moments of silence, added :—

“ Why is it, father, that we cannot always think for ourselves, and form our own opinion of what is right and wrong ? ”

“ Do you mean independently of the Bible ? ” asked Mr. Summerville.

“ Why, not exactly,” replied Richard, unwilling to acknowledge to his father how nearly he did desire to exclude its divine teachings. “ But, for instance, if I had not had you to instruct me, probably I should not have learned to understand the Bible, and should have had different ideas about many things, and it seems such a pity when there are so many that have no one to teach them, that they should be in danger of getting so far out of the way.”

“ It is, indeed, a pity,” replied Mr. Summerville : “ but is it not a fact ? Does not Walter himself show that the natural judgment of a boy, to say nothing of men, is not likely to be correct ? ”

“ I suppose it is so, and that is the reason I asked you the question. Why should it be so ? ”

“ Can it be accounted for in any other way than by the sinfulness of the heart ? ”



“I suppose not,” replied Richard.

“Does’nt it seem plain to you that we need a Bible to tell us what is right, and also that we need to be instructed by good men, who have had their hearts renewed by the Spirit of God?”

“Yes, sir,” said Richard, “I see that we could not get along at all without it.”

“If we had not such a standard of truth, one person would think one thing to be right, and another would think another to be right, and there would be no end to the confusion. Even heathen nations, who have not the true revelation, see the necessity of having some standard, which may possess an authority from which there is no appeal. They can see that human opinions are too various, and too changeable to be trusted.”

“But do you suppose it would be so if men were not sinners?”

“There are many things, no doubt, that must still have been matters of pure revelation. There would not be the same bias to evil, it is true; but none but infinite wisdom can be infallible, even where there is no sin. Whenever these thoughts come into your mind, Richard, remember that it was just that desire

to be independent of God, that the tempter infused into the minds of our first parents, when he promised them that, by eating the forbidden fruit, they should become as gods, knowing good and evil."

By this time they had reached the house, where the little girls were ready to meet them, and where they were always sure of finding that happiest of all earthly scenes,—a happy home circle.



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CHAPTER V.

SPRING had so far advanced that vegetation was beginning to appear in its beauty; the birds were returning from their sojourn in summer climes, and chirping and singing in every direction. Wonderful and beautiful to the city-bred children were the delights of spring in the open country. Many improvements were made about the home of the Summervilles, not the least of which was the laying out of the little garden inclosed around the house, and the turfing of the space in front, while along the edges of the walks were sown the flower-seeds that Maggie and Nannie had found in the old shed.

While Mr. Summerville and Richard worked in the fields, plowing and planting, Mrs. Summerville and the little girls were not less busily employed about the house, beautifying and improving whatever their scanty means and materials would enable them to do. Shrubs were

procured and set out, vines were trained over the rough and unsightly logs, the walks were kept even and in good order; and, in short, good taste and industry had converted this miserable abode, into a home of comfort, and—so far as it could be—of beauty.

Let us now look in upon Mr. Lee and his son Walter at home. Mr. Lee's farm was, in itself considered, a valuable piece of property. With good management, it might have been made a charming place, but negligence was fast bringing it to ruin. The house was large and commodious. It had originally been white, but the paint was worn off, and the house was beginning to look old and dingy. The steps were tumbling down, and the fences around it were broken. A beautiful grove of the natural growth of the soil had been left in front of the house, but the untrimmed branches had grown thick and matted, and cattle, pigs, and fowls were straying at large through it.

Yet Mr. Lee had means sufficient to have kept his house in fine order, and for many years he had done so. The time had been when he had looked forward with the hope and expectation that Walter would soon be able to render him assistance, and he had laboured







Mr. Lee was sitting in his arm-chair, on the porch that ran along the front of his house, smoking his pipe.—  
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cheerfully with this hope, and with the idea always 'uppermost in his mind, that it was for Walter he was labouring, and that this, his only son, would at length be the proprietor of a valuable and beautiful estate. But at the same time he had suffered Walter to grow up in idleness and without restraint. And, besides, he had early comprehended that he was sole heir to his father's property, and from this he had inferred that he need not work, and that he could do as he pleased.

Mr. Lee had seen these bad habits growing and strengthening in his son, but he had waited and waited, year after year, thinking the time would come when they would be subdued more easily and more effectually, or possibly be outgrown. At the same time, it had a very depressing effect upon him, and had by degrees impaired his own energy.

One beautiful evening in the spring, Mr. Lee was sitting in his arm-chair, on the porch that ran along the front of his house, smoking his pipe, and evidently in a deep reverie. He had been that day taking a kind of review of his premises. The conclusion was unavoidable, that things were not as they used to be. The time had been that he would not have

allowed his affairs to fall into such confusion, and he wondered what the reason could be. He was conscious that he felt depressed, and, as he expressed it, "had no heart to work;" and he thought that all could be traced to his disappointment and discouragement about Walter.

Just then Walter rode up to the gate, and jumped from his pony.

"I'll turn over a new leaf," said Mr. Lee, rising with a resolute air, and knocking the ashes from his pipe. "I'll make the boy work!"

Walter walked up to the house, and was met by his father.

"Walter," said he, "I think it time for you to begin to work a little, and I've been planning something for you to do to-morrow."

"I can make my own plans," replied Walter.

"Well now, my boy, look here," said he, coaxingly, "you see how the fence is broken all round here, and the steps are rotting away, and I've no time to mend them. I wish you'd just try your hand at it."

"I reckon if you want that kind of work done, you'll have to get somebody to do it," replied Walter, walking away.

Mr. Lee sat down and took up his pipe again

with an air of discouragement; but he did not quite give it up yet.

"Maybe he'll come round after a while," said he to himself.

So he waited patiently till the next week, expecting every day to see Walter set himself about the work.

At length one morning, as he went out to his work, Walter followed him.

"Where are you going, Walter?" said he.

"To catch Prince," replied Walter.

"Where are you going with Prince?"

"To town."

"When will you fix up these fences?"

"When it's my business to take care of the farm I'll do it, and not before."

And so Mr. Lee gave it up. He had not had energy or decision enough to keep the evil habit from coming upon his son, and he had now far too little efficiency to correct it, after it had become so strong.

Walter rode off to town, and on his way, passed the field where Richard was planting corn.

"Come, Dick," said he, "go to town with me. Get your father to let you off one day. He makes you work like a slave."



“I don’t want to be let off,” said Richard. “I’m sure I would rather work and try to get things comfortable, than to have every thing go to ruin.”

“Ho! ho! You can’t fool me that way. You just work because your father makes you. My father tried to get me into the harness the other day, but I soon showed him that I was’nt to be driven about—I’m too independent for that.”

“What! Too independent to do what your father wants you to do?” exclaimed Richard, with surprise.

“There,—I knew you hadn’t any spirit about you. You’d work all day and all night,—and Sunday too, if your father told you to.”

“My father wouldn’t tell me to do any thing that wasn’t right,” replied Richard; “and I would a great deal rather he should tell me what is best for me to do, for I’m sure I should make mistakes. He never says a word to me about working, though, only to tell me what to do. I work, because the work has to be done, or else we can’t get along at all. Why, who would do this if I didn’t. I’m sure father has as much as he can do, if I do all I can to help.”



“It’s none of my concern who’d do it, only I know I wouldn’t.”

“Well, I think it ought to be my concern.”

“And you mean to say you think it ought to be mine, too. And I mean to say, that is none of your business!” and with his face flushed with anger, he used all sorts of abusive language.

Richard felt all his quick and excitable passions stirred at this wanton insult, but remembering that “he that committeth sin is the servant of sin,” he kept calm, and suffered Walter’s anger to vent itself in vulgar oaths and harsh threats. Walter, finding that Richard would not return evil treatment, and tortured by his own evil passions, rode off. He hated Richard, for, although he had called him a coward, he could not help seeing that he had shown far more courage than himself, and of a far nobler kind.

But Richard felt that he had acted rightly. He had shown himself independent of the evil example of his visiter, and independent of his own passions; and the consciousness of this, gave him new courage in his efforts to attain that true nobility of character that his father had set before him as a model.

It so happened that Richard was obliged to go to town on the same day that this conversation occurred. He did not tell Walter so, because he preferred not to go in company with him. At the same time he feared that he should meet Walter, and that he would be angry with him on account of it. He deferred going as long as he could, in the hope that Walter would have returned. But in spite of this precaution, he met Walter soon after entering the village.

“Well, Dick!” he exclaimed, “what has brought you to town?”

“I came to do something for my father.”

“Why didn’t you come along with me?”

“I was not ready to come, then.”

“But I’d have waited, if I had thought you was coming.”

“I didn’t suppose you’d want my company after what you said to me this morning.”

“You had better say at once that you didn’t want mine; but I shall go home with you, any how.”

“You can do as you please about that.”

“Well, you are an independent fellow!” shouted one of Walter’s comrades, addressing Richard.

“Independent!” said Walter, scornfully; “I’d like to see him show a little of his independence. Why, he daren’t so much as think, unless his father says he may!”

Taunts of this kind were very hard for Richard to bear, because they referred not only to himself, but to his father. His face reddened with anger, and he was about to reply hastily, but he checked himself.

“Ha!” shouted Walter, “you need not pretend to be so cool. You can get as mad as any body, if you’ve a mind to.”

“But I havn’t a mind to,” replied Richard, turning his horse, and riding away.

Having accomplished his errand, he started homeward. He rode on some distance, and was congratulating himself that he had fairly got away from Walter, when he heard the clatter of horses’ hoofs behind him, and turning around, he saw Walter galloping after him.

“You thought you’d get away, didn’t you?” shouted Walter, as soon as he had got within speaking distance. “’Taint so easy, I can tell you, to slip away from me!”

“I didn’t know but you had gone on.”

“Didn’t I tell you I should go home with you? Did you think I would tell a lie?”

“Oh, I hope not!” replied Richard; “but I thought you might have been tired of waiting for me.”

“What have you been doing in town to-day, Dick? and what have you got in those bundles?”

“I’ve some things for father, and some for mother.”

“Well, that isn’t telling what you’ve got.”

“I don’t feel under any obligation to tell you,” replied Richard.

“You don’t, eh? Well, I’ll make you feel under obligations to be civil,” said Walter, riding up close to Richard, and giving his horse a cut with his riding-whip.

Richard’s horse started a little, but he was a quiet creature, and soon resumed his usual gait. Walter was resolved to be avenged on Richard, however, for the cool manner in which he had foiled him in his repeated attacks during the day, and he again rode up and attempted to strike Richard’s horse. This time, Richard turned quickly round and tried to seize Walter’s whip. In the struggle, Walter’s horse became restive, and at length pitched his rider over his head. Richard caught the bridle of the pony, and hastily fastening the two horses

to the fence, ran to Walter, who, he saw from the first, was not much hurt. He assisted him to a stump by the road side, on which he seated himself to recover from the shock. He was somewhat bruised, but was soon able to go on.

The two boys mounted again, and rode on—but Walter was completely crestfallen, and scarcely spoke, except occasionally to utter an angry exclamation against his pony. Richard hoped that Walter might learn a lesson from this little incident, and be less overbearing in future; but it was not so. He still continued to be Richard's tormentor whenever they met, proving the truth of the saying, that it is not those that have injured him, that a malicious person most hates, but those whom he has injured. This, of course, became a constant trial to Richard, but it was a constant discipline too, by which he was strengthened not only in resisting evil example, but also in struggling against his own passions.

And he had many other trials to bear. His work was laborious, and it was by no means according to his natural taste. Yet he felt that they must all work, or else give up, and live on, in hopeless poverty and misery, all their lives.



His greatest trial was that he was deprived of the opportunity of pursuing his studies. He was fond of books, and had always stood high as a scholar, and his own ambition, as well as his father's design, was, that he might be able to go through, what is generally termed a thorough course of education. There was no hope of his being able to accomplish this,—at least, so soon as he wished, in their present situation, unless he could manage in some way to prosecute his studies at home. This he resolved to do. He had a number of books that he had not thoroughly studied, and he determined to devote his evenings resolutely to them, till he had mastered them. But he found it a hard task. He always came home from his work extremely tired, and he often found himself so dull and sleepy, from being out of doors, engaged in active labour through the day, that it was almost impossible for him to apply himself to study. But though he was sometimes discouraged, he yet felt that it was far better than if he were not able to study at all; and by perseverance, he became, after a while, so habituated to his circumstances, as to make considerable progress.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE summer passed rapidly away, and the exertions of the Summervilles to keep their farm in order, and to secure for themselves prosperity and comfort, were very great. Toil ! toil ! day after day, would suffice for a general description of their mode of life. Yet interspersed among the days of labour were seasons of refreshment, when the family gathered in their snug little home, to enjoy each other's society, and beguile their weariness with cheerful conversation. And how precious were their Sabbaths ! They were, it is true, deprived of the privilege of going to the house of God ; but the holy hours, diversified with reading, singing, conversation and instruction, never became a weariness, but, on the contrary, were always a delight.

From their early childhood, the children had been accustomed to constant familiarity with the word of God ; and in consequence of the frequency with which religious subjects had

been made the theme of conversation between their parents and them, there existed nothing of that stiffness and reserve which too often rears an icy barrier between parents and children, on these all-important topics.

On the Sabbath, Mr. and Mrs. Summerville never failed to devote a large portion of their time to household instruction, and the children were sure to learn something, or at least to be newly impressed with something that would go with them through the week, restraining them from sin and keeping them in the fear of God.

The influence of the Sunday-school, too, was beginning to be felt in the community. The children became interested, and they soon learned to love their kind instructors. They became more orderly, and were less disposed to roam about on the Sabbath. Mr. Summerville had written back to some of his friends in the East, and through their aid, had procured a small library, and a pleasant sight it was to see those neglected and ill-taught children, seated by the wayside, or gathered in groups as they walked home, poring over their books instead of wandering about, profaning the holy day.

But a time of calamity was approaching, compared with which all the disappointment

and toil they had undergone, seemed light. During the spring and early part of the summer, the rains had been unusually abundant, so as at times to threaten serious injury to the crops; but, about the first of July, a drought commenced, which continued without a drop of rain till the ground was parched and the grass burned and blackened almost as if a fire had swept over it. The crops failed, and desolation reigned. Even the children learned to look every morning for some token of relief, but they looked in vain. The same dull, brazen hue overspread the sky, and the beams of the sun poured down with unmitigated heat.

To Mr. Summerville the calamity was very severe. He had hoped that if he could obtain from his fields as abundant a crop as they had seemed at first to promise, the worst of his difficulties would be over. But his hopes were cut off, and poverty, sterner and more severe than he had ever felt, seemed inevitable.

The effect of this terrible season of drought was to produce a wide-spread and wasting sickness. Whole households were stricken down; and, in many instances, every inmate of the family was lying helpless, and unable to procure a cup of cold water, except as some one

of the miserable sufferers crawled from his bed to get it. To obtain help from abroad was almost impossible, as there was scarcely a family in which disease and death was not making ravages. Doubtless many died merely for want of proper attention. The poor crops that survived the drought stood uncut in very many fields because there was no one to gather them. The memory of that distressing year is still fresh in the minds of all who witnessed its desolations throughout the region of country where the scene of our story is laid.

Mr. Summerville's family, being unaccustomed to the Western climate, were among the severest sufferers. Every member of the household was prostrated. The children were all seized with the prevalent fever, but Mr. and Mrs. Summerville suffered less severely in respect of bodily ailments. They were able, one or the other of them, to keep about, at least for a few hours at a time, to wait upon their suffering children.

Nannie's fever soon assumed a malignant typhoid form, and though Richard and Maggie were able after a couple of weeks to assist about the house, Nannie still lay in a very critical condition. The rest of the family forgot their



own sufferings in their solicitude and care for the pet of the household.

Poor Nannie lay in utter unconsciousness, while father, mother, brother and sister, by turns, watched beside her bed, and bathed her burning forehead, or moistened her lips. "Nannie, darling!" was breathed over her many, many times, but the drooping eyelids never opened unless to show the vacant wildness of eyes that saw not the beloved and loving forms that bent over her. Every remedy failed, and the wild fluttering of the pulse, and the glare of the sightless eyeballs were soon lost in the icy chill of death.

Beneath this last severe shock the energies of the afflicted household were for a time paralyzed. It seemed to Mr. Summerville almost as if he had nothing now to labour for. He felt so perfectly crushed by this affliction, and so debilitated by his own sufferings, that he was almost ready to give up in despair.

One morning, not long after little Nannie's death, Mr. Summerville took his Bible to conduct their usual family worship. Their course of reading brought him that morning to the forty-third chapter of Isaiah. He commenced reading:—"But now, thus saith the Lord that

created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not : for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee ; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." He could go no farther, but bowing his head, he wept. The whole household was melted in tears, such as flow from the heart when its tenderest feelings are touched, and when the fountains of bitter sorrow are stirred by the healing branch that God alone can cast in.

From that time, the grief of the afflicted family assumed a different character. Not that they sorrowed less, but they bowed submissively to the hand that chastened them, as to the hand of a loving father ; and, instead of being depressed and discouraged, they seemed animated to a double diligence, in view of the shortness of life, and the necessity of doing quickly what they had to do. Diligence in a lawful calling was one of the duties which Mr. Summerville had always specially impressed

upon the minds of his children, not only that they might secure the good things of this life, but also that they might be kept from those temptations that are sure to beset the idle, and that they might redeem time for the reading of the Scriptures and prayer, as well as to seek opportunities of doing good to their neighbours and companions.

All the members of the family were now able to resume their accustomed labour, though they were still weak and could do but little. Mr. Summerville and Richard went to the fields to secure what was left of the summer's crop, and a poor and miserable remnant they found it. It soon became evident to Mr. Summerville that unless he found some other employment for the winter besides the mere care of his farm, his family must suffer for the necessities of life. The year they had already spent in the West had drawn heavily upon their slender resources. As yet, they had received scarcely any income, and the closest economy had been necessary to keep them from actual want. But Mr. Summerville's maxim had not failed him; and he had so far succeeded in meeting his adverse circumstances, as to be independent of all earthly resources beyond the labour

of himself and his family. The time of sickness, however, had considerably increased their expenses, and now there was no alternative but for him to leave his family, and go to the neighbouring village to procure employment for the winter. In the mean time, Richard was to be left with the care of things at home; and, as he was now in his fifteenth year, and a manly, resolute lad, he might very well be trusted. It was a severe trial to Mr. Summerville to be so long absent from his family, but there was no way to avoid it, and he immediately commenced making the necessary preparations. He desired to do as much toward getting ready for the winter as possible before leaving, so as to make the remaining work as light as he could for Richard. Many were the good talks they had during the few weeks that passed. The recent afflictions they had suffered, and the straitened circumstances in which they were placed, had produced a very marked effect upon the mind of Richard. His whole manner had become more subdued and quiet, and it was evident that his feelings were much softened.

One day, as Mr. Summerville and Richard were husking corn together, Richard suddenly exclaimed:—



“Father, I don’t know how I shall get along when you are away.”

“Why, my son? Do you think the work will be too hard for you?”

“Oh, no, father; I wasn’t thinking at all of that. I was only thinking how very often you have been obliged to remind me of my duties, and to point out my faults. I shall have no one to do this for me, and I am afraid I shall go very far out of the way.”

“But it is necessary that you should learn self-reliance. No one knows what circumstances may occur by which you may be thrown entirely upon yourself; and you have reached an age when, if you have any good principles or any strength of character, you should exercise them.”

“But I am afraid to trust myself, father.”

“You know you need not and should not trust yourself alone. There is a throne of grace where you may always find strength and wisdom for every emergency. With faith in your heavenly Father, and seeking earnestly to know his will, you may safely trust yourself; for, even if you should make some mistakes in judgment, (which you are very likely to do,) God will not suffer you to wander from the



way of duty if you sincerely ask him to direct you. It is very important that you should in this way learn to rely upon yourself, without depending too much upon the advice even of your best friends. But you must not misunderstand me. As long as you have parents to guide you, you should thank God for it; but if it becomes necessary for you to trust to yourself in a great measure, don't shrink from doing so. Still, when I am away, you can go to your mother for advice."

"I shall certainly do that; but I have been so much with you lately, that it seems more natural and easy to go to you. And besides, I don't feel as if mother knew as much of my faults as you do."

"That is all true; but you will be more under her eye during the winter; and, if you only open your heart to her with confidence, you will not miss my counsel so much. There is no way in which a good and dutiful son can add so much to the happiness of a mother as by showing confidence and respect towards her."

"I know it, father. If mother should seem unhappy, and I should feel that I had made her so, I don't know what I should do."

"You must remember especially her grief on

account of little Nannie, and be all the more tender and affectionate for that reason. Your little sister was a sunbeam in the house, and much as we all loved her, no one misses her as your mother does."

"Oh, father!" said Richard, choking with emotion, "you will pray for me, I know you will."

"Yes, my son,—every day. And, Richard, I shall feel that affliction has indeed been sanctified to us, if it leads you to consecrate yourself to God, and to enter into covenant with him to be his. You may be ever so good a boy, and ever so dutiful a son, and yet, without this, all your goodness will be as nothing in the sight of God."

"I know it," said Richard. "And I do hope I have given myself to God. I hope I am a Christian."

Richard had never before expressed such a hope, though he had long felt, at times, that his peace was made with God through the blood of Christ; and, since the death of his dear little sister, he had, in secret, solemnly dedicated himself to his Creator, and sought peace and forgiveness through the name of Jesus. He had never dared to express this hope, however,

lest he should, after all, be deceived. But he had come to the conclusion that he might feel more strength and determination in pursuing a Christian course if he should make his feelings known to his parents, in order that, in the character of a Christian, he might have their counsels and their prayers.

Mr. Summerville had observed a change in Richard's conversation and conduct, and had hoped that he had given himself to God; but he thought it best to wait till Richard should speak to him on the subject. His heart was filled with gratitude, when at length this declaration was made; and, for a few moments, he could only lift his soul in silent thanksgiving to the God of all grace for the abundant blessing he had bestowed on one over whom so many tears had been shed, and for whom so many prayers had been offered.

At length, he laid his hand upon Richard's head, exclaiming, fervently :—"I would rather hear that declaration from your lips, my son, than see you the heir of countless millions. May God keep you, and preserve you, and grant that this hope may indeed endure unto eternal life. But be careful that you do not build upon a foundation of sand. There is peculiar

danger in a time of affliction of embracing a false hope. The grief a person feels on account of the affliction, may be mistaken for repentance; the emptiness of the world, after an object of affection has been removed, may be mistaken for a voluntary renouncing of its pleasures, and the craving one feels for comfort, makes him ready to grasp the pleasing hope of heaven; when, perhaps, after all, it is only because his earthly pleasures have turned to ashes. When time has removed the bitterness of grief, perhaps things will look differently to you."

"I have thought of that, father, and have prayed that I may not be deceived."

"What was it, Richard, that first turned your thoughts to your own salvation?"

"I don't know," replied Richard. "I have thought more or less about it ever since I can remember. I can't remember a time when you had not instructed me about these things."

"Well, then, why do you think you are a Christian? What feelings, or what purposes have you, different from those you have always had?"

"I am sure I enjoy reading the Bible and praying more than I ever did before. The Bi-

ble seems precious to me, and when I read it, it seems as if it was all addressed to me. And besides, I think I have deliberately come to the conclusion to serve Christ."

"Well, my son, will that save you?"

"Oh, no, father. If I should always do my best, Christ alone could save me. It seems very strange to me that any one can think of trusting to his own righteousness. I'm sure a person would have to be a great deal better than I have ever been, to think of such a thing. Why, it seems to me, I have never done a single thing just right yet."

"You never have," replied Mr. Summerville. "In the sight of a pure and holy God, no thought, word, or action, proceeding from a heart in which the remains of sin still exist, can be holy."

"Then I'm quite sure I have no righteousness to trust in; but the righteousness of Christ seems perfect. I read, this morning, a verse in the Bible that has been in my mind all day: it was, 'And ye are complete in him!' When I think about all my sins and imperfections, that expression, 'complete in him,' seems very sweet to me."

"Yes: it is, indeed, a comfort and a hiding-



place. I hope you will take that for a motto, and whether you feel encouraged or depressed, remember that you are 'complete in him,' and that without him you are but a withered branch."

Richard was much better satisfied after he knew that his parents were acquainted with his state of mind. He felt that he stood in a different light now, and that their prayers and efforts for him would have a more definite object. And they felt very differently towards him, too. He was no longer a mere boy, given them to be trained for God, but he was a fellow-heir with them of the same promises, and partaker of the same hopes.

The next Monday morning after this conversation, Mr. Summerville went to the village to search for employment. He was skilful, and readily found work by which he hoped to keep his family in tolerable comfort. It was a sad and lonely day when that affectionate household was separated. They had never before been so situated, and it would be hard to tell which suffered most, the father, as he took his lonely walk to the village, thinking at every step of the dear ones from whom he was becoming an exile, and whom he was leaving

destitute of his protection and care, or the family at home, looking forward to the dreary winter of his absence. But outwardly, at least, they were cheerful; for they had commended themselves and each other to the care of their heavenly Father, without whose permission they knew no trouble could come near their dwelling.



## CHAPTER VII.

RICHARD often—very often—experienced the truth of what had been said to him about self-reliance. Scarcely a day passed that he did not need his father's counsel. He needed it, not only that he might learn to lay out his work to the best advantage, but still more in matters of vital importance. He often wished to ask an explanation of some passage of Scripture, or to seek direction in some practical duty. But his never failing resort was to the throne of grace; and he often experienced the illuminating power of the Spirit of God, in opening to his mind the sacred truths of Scripture and applying them to his heart, to a degree which he would not have enjoyed had he relied on his father instead of going at once to the Fountain of all wisdom.

So far as it regarded his work, he often found that he made for himself a considerable portion of labour, which, by more careful

management, he might have avoided. Yet, if he was sometimes discouraged, on the whole he succeeded admirably; and his mother's smile of approbation was an abundant reward for his labour. A more cheerful family could scarcely be found; though their garments were coarser and their fare more frugal, and their work more toilsome than any to which they had ever been accustomed. Richard worked manfully. The cattle never wanted fodder because he was not ready to give it to them; and his mother never wanted for wood, though it was no light labour to cut it in the forest and draw it to the door-yard. True, his hands grew red and rough with toil and his face with exposure; and his garments were coarse and patched, and one would have had trouble to recognise in him the delicate looking lad that Richard Summerville was in the city. But he had been trained to a truthful and manly mode of thinking that made him indifferent to these externals, so long as they were necessary accompaniments of honourable labour, and he felt that if his mind and heart were kept uncorrupt, outward deficiencies could be of no real injury. He had learned that happiness and true nobility do not depend







He sat down upon a log and began to think of his own situation.—p. 97.

upon the casual incidents that happen to us on our way through life, but on the use we make of those incidents, and the impress they leave upon the character.

Richard had been for several days drawing wood for his mother, in order that he might get a little ahead, so as to gain time for clearing a portion of ground which his father wished to have ready for cultivation in the spring. This was the hardest kind of work he had yet attempted. The land was in all its original wildness. The thick, tangled undergrowth was almost impenetrable, and old, decaying logs were lying in every direction; and, for a boy of fifteen to undertake such a piece of work single-handed, was quite formidable.

After having worked several days, he could scarcely see that he had made any progress: though he had collected two or three enormous brush-heaps ready to burn in the spring, yet the work advanced so slowly that he felt quite discouraged. He sat down upon a log and began to think of his own situation. All his hopes and prospects seemed cut off, and he felt ready to give up exertion. They had been in their new home a year, and difficulties and trials had thickened around them at every

step. Although they had all laboured diligently, yet they did not prosper, and their present situation held out little hope for the future.

It had been his cherished desire to obtain an education, but how was it ever to be accomplished? He could see no possible way, and he came to the conclusion that he might as well give it up. He was very tired, and, as it was near sunset, he shouldered his axe and turned his steps toward home.

After supper, he did not feel at all like study; but it had become so much a habit with him that he took down his books, drew up his chair, and, resting his elbows on the table, sat for a long time seemingly unconscious that his books lay unopened before him. After a while his mother had the tea-dishes all nicely put away, and, getting the work-basket, came and sat down opposite to him. She noticed his weary look and said in her affectionate way—

“You look very tired, Richard.”

“I *am* very tired,” said he.

“How much have you done to-day?” asked his mother, wishing to divert his thoughts.

“Not much, mother,” he replied. “Clearing ground is slow work.”

“Very slow, I know,” said she. “What have you been thinking about that has kept you so long from opening your books?”

“I was thinking that there’s no use in my trying to study. I am always so tired that I can scarcely keep awake, and I get along so slowly that it’s quite discouraging. It isn’t at all likely that I shall ever go through a course of study, and I can just be a plain farmer, and give up trying to study much.”

Mrs. Summerville smiled.

“You think me very short-sighted, I see, mother,” continued Richard; “but now I have a good common education, and why can’t I get along pretty well if I am to be a farmer, as I suppose I shall be?”

“You know, of course,” replied his mother, “that a certain amount of knowledge is of real practical value, even to a farmer; and I suppose your idea would be to rest satisfied when you have acquired that. I think you had better look farther. Who do you suppose is likely to secure most enjoyment to himself,—a man who has just sufficient knowledge to carry him through his day’s toil, and, when that is done, sits down by his fire-side with a mind perfectly vacant, except to revolve over and



over his daily work, or one who has sufficient knowledge to enjoy books and papers, or even reflection and anticipation?"

Richard's countenance gradually brightened, and he answered her only with a smile.

"And then," continued his mother, "how much more influence a man may exert if his mind is so cultivated that his judgment is clear, and that he has ability to guide, not only his own affairs, but to direct others, too. Haven't men been called from the plough to the highest offices of responsibility?"

"Well, mother, I don't think I'll ever say any thing more about not needing to study because I am to be a farmer."

"But I haven't done yet," said his mother. "Don't you know it has always been your father's determination that you should be thoroughly educated?"

"Yes; but I see no chance for it now."

"Neither do I, except just the chance you now have of studying at home when your work is done. It was just the hope of being better able to educate the children that made us willing to come out here. And we may be able to accomplish it yet," said she, smiling cheerfully, "though at present every thing seems against



us. What would your father say, Richard, if he knew you were disposed to give up after we have made such sacrifices?"

"I don't know, indeed. I hope you won't tell him," said Richard. "I'm ashamed of thinking of such a thing."

"And, besides pleasing your father, you have a heavenly Father whom you should seek still more earnestly to please. It is he that has given you your powers of mind; and, if you let them lie idle, and use only the strength of your body, you surely will not please him."

"Oh, mother, why didn't I think of that?" said Richard, drawing his chair close to her's, and looking up earnestly into her face. "When shall I learn to remember that I am not my own?"

"It's a lesson you may study a great while, my son, without learning it fully; and, as long as there is any sin in you, you will find that self likes to govern self. If you entertain the hope of a Christian, Richard, you must seek to be wholly God's. You don't know what God may have for you to do yet. You are young, and many changes may take place before you are a man. You may be called to preach the

gospel yet, and if you should, you will need a well-cultivated and well-balanced mind."

"Mother," said Richard, "do you think that is possible?"

"Certainly, it is possible. We cannot understand the purposes of God. It may be that it was to train you for that very work that we were brought here. Perhaps if we had stayed in the East, you might have become so absorbed in study that you would not even have given your thoughts to the consideration of religion sufficiently to have become a Christian. Look back at the way by which the Lord has led you, and remember that even afflictions may work great good for you and for us all."

Richard did not reply, but he and Maggie (who had been a silent listener to the conversation) took up their books and began to study.

Mrs. Summerville was not a well-educated woman, according to the common use of the phrase, but she possessed good judgment, and great tenderness of feeling; and it was this that enabled her to retain her influence over the mind of Richard. She had always been a reader, and therefore had clearer and more intelligent views on most subjects than many women of her class. She had, besides, that

clearness of apprehension and enlargement of mind which constant familiarity with the things of religion is sure to give. The interests of the soul, the things of eternity, the building up of Christ's kingdom in the world, are matters of such vastness that they cannot be contemplated with that intensity of interest that the Christian feels in them without calling out the powers of the mind, and greatly enlarging its capacity. Another means of intellectual improvement that Mrs. Summerville had enjoyed, was access to the best preaching. How powerful a means of improvement this is to the mass of the people can be best seen by observing those who are deprived of it.

The considerations Richard's mother had brought to his mind on the subject of study, placed the matter in a new light before him, and never lost their influence. Through the remainder of the winter, he plied his evening tasks with great diligence. And, when out at his solitary employment in the woods, he often thought of the incentives she had placed before him. New prospects seemed to open. He had supposed that the calamities the family had suffered would have quite banished from the minds of his parents every thought of at-

tempting to qualify him for any other position than such a one as that for which he vainly imagined a good pair of hands and an able body were all that was necessary. Now to think that he should have been the first to give up, was quite mortifying. But (as it often happens) his feeling of shame for his own irresolution, was a powerful agent in making him more resolute for the future.

Meanwhile, Mr. Summerville pursued his labour in town. But it was a weary, weary life he was living. He was still oppressed with weakness and langour, resulting from his sickness; and, severed as he was from the sympathies and comforts of home, it was very hard to bear. His board—if board it could be called that was destitute of every comfort—was of the plainest and coarsest kind, and quite different in quality from any thing to which he had ever been accustomed. One of the greatest trials to the family at home was to notice his miserably enfeebled appearance when he visited them. Richard especially felt it, and heartily wished he could go and take his father's place. But that would not answer, for his earnings would have done but little toward supporting the family. Every thought of his father strength-

ened his own resolution, and animated him with new energy in his work, and he delighted to keep things so in order, that whenever his father was at home, he might feel that every thing was going on right, and be relieved from all care.

The closest economy was practised in order to make the most of the earnings of Mr. Summerville. It was necessary that they should not only supply the wants of the family from day to day, but that they should also suffice for them after he should return to the cultivation of his farm in the spring till they might be able to depend upon its produce for subsistence. Economy and diligence, however, insured success; and, amidst all their discomforts and inconveniences, the time of Mr. Summerville's exile from home slipped away more rapidly than they had anticipated, and at length drew near its termination. The last week came, and on the next Saturday night he was to come home, and not to leave again. Maggie ran many times to the gate to look down the road and see if he was coming. He did come at last, and deep and heartfelt were the thanksgivings that rose from the family altar that night.



Mr. Summerville was greatly pleased with the improvement Richard had made during the winter, as well as with his diligence in labour. Not only had he kept things in excellent order about the farm, but he had also succeeded in his attempt at clearing, so that another field of considerable size was added to the ground they had to cultivate. Mr. Summerville found Richard a much more efficient helper than he had been before. He had become far more independent so far as work was concerned, and had fully proved the truth of what his father had taught him about the necessity of self-reliance in order to bring out his character, and give him a true and manly independence in respect to outward circumstances.

But this kind of independence, though very important in order to secure success in matters of business, is, after all, (as Mr. Summerville had often taught Richard,) not the most important kind. There is a strength and manliness of character far more important. It is that which relates to the affairs of the soul. It is quite possible to put in peril the interests of immortality by mere indolence, by mere want of that energy and decision of character which every one can see to be necessary in relation to

the affairs of this life. It was in respect to these things that Mr. Summerville felt the greatest anxiety. All the improvements he saw in Richard's manner of working would have given him but little pleasure if he had made no progress in divine things, and in the cultivation of an upright and energetic Christian character.

As to this point, Richard's conduct soon satisfied him. There was such an evident spirit of love in all he did, so much self-sacrifice, such tender devotion to his mother and kindness to his sister, as could only spring from a renewed heart. It was often at no small sacrifice of personal comfort that he performed some service for his mother, or assisted Maggie with her lessons after a hard day's work in the field. Yet Richard was not *naturally* any better than other boys; and, if he was better now, it was only because of the grace of God that had been given him in answer to his fervent prayers, and because of the struggles he had maintained in the strength of God against his sins. By such means he was daily growing in grace, as well as in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

But we cannot dwell minutely either upon

the details of domestic life, or the progress of parental instruction. We must hasten through the summer, which proved to be one of considerable prosperity. The crops were abundant, and the health of the community good. Mr. Summerville now began to feel relieved from the pressure of poverty; and, by the time he had disposed of the produce of his farm, he was able to lay aside something towards the first payment for it, and he could look forward with very reasonable hopes that, before many years, the farm would be his own. The land was very productive, notwithstanding the miserable condition in which he had found the place; and, when the rich soil, that was still covered for the most part with its native growth of timber, should be cleared and put under cultivation, an ordinary degree of prosperity would soon place him in easy circumstances, though it would require not a little hard labour to bring all this about.

## CHAPTER VIII.

PASSING over an interval of three years, we shall find some changes have taken place.

We will, for a few moments, leave the Summervilles, and look at the neighbouring farm. The paint upon the house is still rusty and worn. The steps that go up to the front porch are not yet mended, and, of course, three years have not at all improved their condition. Here and there even a bundle of rags has taken the place of window glass. The fences are thrown down, and cattle and horses roam unchecked wherever they please. But Walter's pony is not among them, nor is Walter himself to be seen. Mr. Lee no longer sits in the porch, smoking his pipe. There are strange faces and uncouth forms moving about, and every thing looks desolate in the extreme. The story is a short and a sad one. Mr. Lee sleeps his last sleep. His body has been committed to the dust, and his spirit has returned to God who gave it.

Mrs. Lee could no longer remain on the farm after her husband's death ; for, though Walter had nearly reached the age of manhood, she had no one upon whom she could depend to supply her with the common comforts of life. For this reason, she sold the estate ; at which step Walter became so enraged that he forsook his mother, leaving his curses upon her head, and went away. Mrs. Lee removed to the neighbouring village, where she inhabited a small and mean abode, and where grief and misery are fast doing their work upon her broken and enfeebled constitution. With the family who took their farm we have no concern. The condition of the place tells all we wish to know of their character.

But we will follow Walter. Like the prodigal of old, he had taken the portion of goods that fell to him, though he was still several years in his minority, and gone to a distant place where he had professed to enter upon a course of study, preparatory to a collegiate and professional life. He had never considered that any thing could happen to interfere with his becoming proprietor of his father's valuable estate, where he expected to live upon the labour of others, and pass his time



in idleness. Now that this prospect was cut off, he resolved, at all hazards, to be a gentleman, (using the word according to his idea of it;) and to prepare himself for the legal profession, seemed to him the surest way of attaining this end.

So he entered the preparatory school. He carried with him the same insolent manner that had grown upon him from his childhood, and resolved, from the first day, that he would show himself an independent fellow. How he succeeded in his attempt to lord it over his companions, it is not worth while to tell; but it is certain that he found some who were quite as independent as himself, and many who were quite ready to laugh at his arrogance, as well as at his ignorance.

It was not long before he came into collision with his preceptor, and, rather than submit, he left the school. And here we take leave of him. It would be easy to trace his downward progress from this point. Yet he is an independent fellow in some respects; let us give him due credit. He has put away the restraints of order and goodness; such restraints as keep the angels in their bright homes. He has renounced the fear of God and man. He

has followed the impulses of his own will, corrupt and misguided as it is. In a word, he has done as he pleased, and must now reap the reward.

And now let us return to the Summervilles. They still inhabit the log cabin; but how changed is its appearance. There is a garden of flowers in front, laid out tastefully and decorated with trees and shrubs that have begun to thrive and bloom beautifully. There are tasteful trellises made by Richard's own hand, over which vines climb, and twining roses droop with their fragrant wealth of blossoms. The cabin itself is half concealed with honeysuckle and sweet brier, and looks like the abode of happiness, taste and comfort. A neat paling separates the flower garden from the vegetable garden, over which may be seen the well-kept walks, and smooth beds and tasteful arrangement of its products, betokening the hand of industry and care.

Within the dwelling, every thing bears the same impress. It is a log cabin still, it is true, but it is a model of its kind. There is a beautiful girlish form moving about, just adding the last touches to the well-spread tea-table, and occasionally looking out at the open door. The

face is surely Maggie's, the same sweetness of expression, the same loving eyes; but it is no longer little Maggie. She is sixteen now, and they are her hands that keep every thing in such order. They are neither white nor delicate, it is true, but they are hands that have done something. It is Maggie that steps in between her mother and all the laborious details of domestic labour. It is she that keeps the shrubbery trimmed, and the vines trained, and watches every opening bud, and slips off every decaying leaf.

And now they have come. The father and brother open the gate and enter the walk. Richard has grown nearly to the stature of manhood and is no longer a boy, but a youth of eighteen.

Tea is soon over, and the tea things put away, and Maggie takes her water-pot and goes out among her flowers. Richard follows her, and they wander about, lifting here a stray branch, and there lopping off a superfluous limb; stopping now to inhale the breath of the roses, and then stooping to admire some delicate, half-concealed beauty near the ground. Richard is unusually silent, but Maggie talks cheerfully and laughs gayly. At length, they have reached a corner of the garden where

Richard has made seats under the shade of an ancient tree.

“Come here, Maggie,” said he, “and sit down a while.”

“Why, Richard, what is the matter?” said Maggie, noticing for the first time his unusually grave look.

“I have something to tell you.”

“Nothing bad, I hope,” said she,—half alarmed by his serious manner.

“Nothing bad, Maggie; but yet it is something that may make you feel bad. I am going to leave home.”

“Oh, Richard! Leave home—did you say? What for?”

“I am going to school.”

“Then you will be gone a long time?”

“Yes, Maggie. I don’t suppose I shall ever come home to stay. I shall be only a visiter when I come again.”

“We can’t do without you, indeed we cannot,” said Maggie, bursting into tears. “You must not go.”

“Think, Maggie. I haven’t told you all yet. You should not feel so.”

“It is selfish, I know, Richard; but how can I do without you? You are the only com-



panion I have. And yet it will be for your good, and I ought to be glad you are going. When did you conclude to go?"

"Only to-day. Father and I have been talking it over, and the matter is all settled. I am to go in about a month."

"So soon? But why don't you expect ever to live at home again? Won't you come here when you are through school?"

"I will tell you all about it. Do you remember one evening a great while ago, that winter that father was away, my talking with mother about giving up trying to study?"

"Yes: I remember it very well."

"Do you remember mother's saying that I did not know what I might be yet, and that I might be a minister of the gospel?"

"Yes."

"Well, that idea never has left me. It has been uppermost in my mind ever since. I have studied and worked with that view, and wondered and wondered whether it ever could be. I didn't see how it was possible for me to go away from home. To-day father called me, and I sat on a log by him, and then he proposed that I should go away to school. I told him I could not go, for he could not do the work



alone, but he said he could find some one to help him when he needed help, and that he was anxious to have me go. It came into my mind at once that it was my duty to go, and that it might open the way for me to be a minister of the gospel. So I told father that that had been on my mind for a long time, and he seemed greatly pleased, and said he would rather see me than any thing else in the world. He told me, too, and isn't it singular, Maggie? that he and mother had often talked about it, and prayed that the way might be opened for me; and yet they never urged it upon me, because they wanted me to be guided by my own feelings of duty."

"But how can mother let you go?" said Maggie.

"I know it will be a trial to her, but she would very cheerfully give me up for such a service."

"So you go in a month! And how long will it be before you get through studying?"

"Oh, seven or eight years, I suppose. I shall have to begin pretty low down, you know, Maggie; but I would cheerfully labour many years, if I thought I could at last be made useful in building up the kingdom of Christ."

Richard felt that his reasons did not come with their full force to his sister's heart. Maggie had not yet given herself to the Saviour, and she could not appreciate the ardour with which a soul that truly loves him, can devote itself to the work of building up his church on earth.

Richard drew nearer his sister, and taking her hand in his own, said :—

“Dear sister, I wish you felt these things as I do.”

“I wish so too, Richard,” she replied. “I could bear to have you go then.”

“Is that all that makes you wish so?”

“No. I do wish I was a Christian. I have often wished so. I know that any one who has been so well taught as I have, is very deeply guilty if she is not a Christian.”

“Oh, sister, do not be satisfied with wishing. Strive earnestly. Ask to be taught by the Divine Spirit. There is no other way to secure salvation. If I could only tell you how blessed it is to love Christ, I know you would desire it above all things. But you cannot know any thing about the love of Christ till you feel it.”

“I will!” she exclaimed fervently. “I will try to seek Christ.”

The night dews were beginning to fall, and

Richard led his sister into the house. There were traces of tears on his mother's face, and the quietness and tenderness of the family toward each other showed that their thoughts were all centered on the one dear object of affection that was so soon to be removed from them.

Richard sought the earliest opportunity of conversation with his mother, and found, as he believed, that, while it was at a great sacrifice of her personal feelings and pleasures that she could consent to his separation from them, she joyfully gave him up to the work to which she believed the Master had called him.

During the four weeks that intervened between this conversation and his departure, Richard applied himself diligently to labour. The thought would often come into his mind with overwhelming power, that the time was so near when he must leave his beloved home, his parents and sister, and be thrown upon his own resources of wisdom and energy, in the management of his affairs. And then, too, to think that he should probably never return, except for a few weeks, but should pass on from school to college, and from college to the seminary, and then, and then—what then? He knew not.

Mrs. Summerville and Maggie plied their needles, sometimes in silence, and sometimes, it may be, in tears—but Maggie was very thoughtful. Her brother's conversation had an effect upon her mind, and she could not, if she had chosen, rid herself of the sense of obligation that rested upon her, in consequence of her solemn promise to him. And she did not wish to rid herself of it. She chose rather to cherish it, and it was just this, under the power of God's Spirit, that finally brought her, in penitence and faith, to the foot of the cross.

The labour of love was at last completed, and Richard Summerville bade farewell to the cherishing and nourishing influences of home. It is difficult to appreciate the situation of the Summerville family, unless one has been placed in similar circumstances. How the domestic endearments strengthen and become concentrated in such a situation of loneliness must be felt, to be fully known. To be so entirely cut off from social intercourse, and thrown upon each other for society, cannot but have the effect to strengthen all the domestic affections in a family where such affections are properly felt and cherished. And then, to pass through scenes of affliction together, to feel together

the heart-throbbings of anguish under some common bereavement, or some sore calamity, forms a powerful bond of union between those that are sheltered by the same roof. And still more, the instructions and heavenly influences of a Christian home, give strength to the ties that bind each member of the household to the other. It need not be thought strange if Richard's departure revived the grief of those that were left, for the lost lamb of the flock,—the dear little Nannie. Maggie especially was almost inconsolable. Her sole companion was removed, and she wandered among her flowers and shrubs in her hours of leisure, looking sad and listless as though all her interest in them was gone. This, however, was but temporary. With that elasticity of spirits which our Creator has so kindly bestowed upon the young, she regained her cheerfulness, and resumed her activity. She still felt lonely, but she strove to be cheerful for her parents' sake.



## CHAPTER IX.

As Richard is the subject of our story, we must now leave the log cabin, and follow him, though it would be far more agreeable to linger about the new premises and watch the improvements that go on year after year. There is much to nourish true poetic feeling in watching the progress of a Western home under the direction of taste, energy, and domestic love. There is much to keep up a pleasing excitement of mind in tracing the planting, springing up and maturing of civilized and cultivated life, on the black soil where the decaying leaves of centuries have lain undisturbed, and amid the impenetrable thickets of the primeval forest where a home has never before been reared. We soon learn to feel interested in that circle whose home shows such an appreciation of true domestic happiness as we have seen in the Summervilles, and as may be seen in the progress of many a household in the wide

West. We leave them with regret, but we shall visit them again.

Richard's feelings were a strange compound of pleasure and pain; and, as the lumbering stage-coach toiled over the rough road, you might almost read his thoughts in the varying expression of his countenance. Now his affections travel back to the home circle, and he wonders what they are doing, and how his father gets along with his work, and we sympathize with the painful feelings that almost gain the mastery over him, as he remembers that his course of life runs no longer parallel with that of the dear ones with whom he has been so closely identified. Now he looks forward, and his eye brightens with the buoyancy of hope, and his cheek glows with the ardour of a noble devotion, as he remembers the work to which he feels he has been separated.

A few days of travel bring him to his new abode. He has seen but little of the world, and been but little accustomed to intercourse with strangers; and it is not to be wondered at if he feels some trepidation as he walks from the village tavern where the stage has left him, to seek further direction from the principal of the academy, whom he knows only by name.

The arrangement made at home, had been that Mr. Summerville should bear Richard's expenses entirely. This he was now pretty well able to do, and Richard had consented that it should be so, yet he did not intend that it should be necessary. He knew that even if his father could pay his board without any real sacrifice of comfort to the family, yet that amount of money would be of great service to him in making out his payments for the farm. He therefore resolved from the first that he would make every effort to bear that burden himself, though he said nothing about it to his father. This he felt was but an application of the maxim his father had taught him years ago, that the only way to be independent of circumstances is to conquer them, and he now felt the need of all his father's instruction, to sustain him in a course of true and manly independence.

With the assistance of his preceptor, he found a place where he could pay his own board by doing light labour about the house. It seemed light labour to him to have nothing to do but cut wood and attend to the cow, for he had been used to hard work, and he knew it would be much better for him to have some ex-

ercise of that kind than to pass at once from laborious, out-door work, to close confinement and study. It was with much pleasure that he communicated to his father the result of his efforts, and he felt that satisfaction that always accompanies the consciousness of being able to provide for one's own wants, without looking to any earthly source beyond ones-self.

Richard was not long in finding that he had many difficulties to contend with, and that it would require the exercise of all his resolution, strengthened as it had been by his early training, to sustain him. He felt, above all, the need of divine grace to teach and to uphold him, that he might be kept from the ways of evil, and from the corruptions of his own heart. The circumstances of his life so far had kept in constant exercise that kind of independence which overmasters poverty and adversity ; but although his father had taught him the necessity of cultivating that inner strength which would enable him to resist temptation from evil example, as well as from the corrupt inclinations of his own sinful nature, yet he had never been tried very severely by such temptations. But he found now that these trials were to come upon him, and that much effort would be



necessary to maintain an independent virtuous course. He felt still more deeply his need of grace and wisdom from above, that, while he strove to resist adverse influences from without and the struggles of sin within, he might at all times feel his entire dependence upon God.

He had been obliged (as he had told Maggie he should) to begin low down in his course of study, in consequence of his previous limited advantages; and this, together with his rather unpolished appearance, rendered him in some degree, an object of ridicule with a certain class of his fellow-students. There are always some to be found in a school who are ready to judge of the worth of another upon such slight grounds as these; and who, mean and contemptible as their judgments are, have it in their power to make the situation of a companion very uncomfortable.

Richard's intellect was not brilliant. He was not one of those who tread the path of learning without effort, and to whose quick-sighted genius science offers no intricacies; but whatever he acquired, must be done by the long-continued effort of patient industry; and therefore he often found himself ranking below those who, he knew, neither laboured so



faithfully, nor mastered so fully their allotted tasks as he did, and the ranklings of mortified pride though he had never known such a feeling before, often gave him much pain and trouble.

There was one of Richard's fellow-students who, from first acquaintance, pleased him exceedingly. There was a certain kindliness of manner, and open-hearted frankness about him, that gained at once the confidence and affection of all. It so happened that the boarding-place of this young man was near Richard's, so that they were likely to be thrown much together, and they soon became pretty well acquainted.

George Hastings was the son of wealthy parents, and had been brought up in such a manner as never to feel the necessity of self-dependence as to outward things, nor had he been taught his dependence upon Him who is the source of all wisdom and goodness in matters of deeper and more vital importance. He had, however, a good mind, and possessed that kind of penetration which enables one to discern good mental qualities in others, even when concealed by timidity, or by rusticity of manner. He saw that Richard possessed a sound judgment, and that he was controlled by firm princi-

ples that kept him in a straight-forward and even course, and he respected him for it. He saw also that Richard was not appreciated by his fellow-students, and a certain sense of honour and justice, made him throw all his influence in Richard's favour.

Richard had not been long in school before he found his situation becoming more pleasant, and he was able to trace the increased favour with which he was regarded, to George Hastings. He felt grateful to him, and at once regarded him as a true friend.

Before noting the progress of this friendship between the two young men, it may be well to look in upon Richard at home. He soon found that the difficulties of Christian watchfulness vary greatly in different situations. To guard against the power of sin at home, where he was surrounded with every favouring influence, and where there was scarcely a temptation to be met, was quite a different thing from keeping up the same vigilance when those favouring influences were removed; and when alone and unaided by any earthly counsellor, temptations of various kinds were to be vanquished, and annoyances and difficulties were things of almost hourly occurrence.

The family with whom he had taken up his abode, was not a Christian family. No incense ascended from the domestic altar morning and evening. The multitude of God's mercies were unacknowledged; the threatenings of his wrath were not feared; his protection and love were unsought. This deficiency Richard could supply, so far as his own spiritual necessities were concerned, but it was not so easy to screen himself from other difficulties which might have been averted had the family been under the control of religion, and had their house been a house of prayer.

We find him then destitute of controlling religious influences; and, in the cultivation of his Christian character, thrown upon himself and God alone. True, letters often came from home, and they were always filled with counsel from his revered parents; but, separated as they were, and unacquainted with all the details of his every day life, their advice could not always be well adapted, nor could it be such as to meet every emergency.

Without congenial society at home, it was very natural that Richard should find much pleasure in the company of George Hastings. Richard and George studied together, walked

together, spent their hours of recreation together, and had they but prayed together, all would have been well enough—but George Hastings never prayed.

One of their leisure afternoons they had agreed to spend together in fishing. There was a beautiful, quiet and retired spot where the boys of the academy were often to be found enjoying this sport; and on this afternoon we shall find George and Richard seated together on the margin of the clear water, patiently holding their fishing poles, and now and then throwing upon the grass the fruits of their toil or skill. They were very successful; and, having caught as many fish as they cared to carry home, they gathered up their apparatus and were preparing to return.

They had every thing ready, when Richard turned and found George standing by the margin of the water, gazing into its clear depths and apparently absorbed in thought. After a moment, he stepped back and threw himself upon the grass with an impatient and desponding, “Heigh ho!”

“Why, what has happened, George?” said Richard.

“Nothing. I was just thinking.”



“Yes,—I knew you were thinking, but what about?”

“That’s the question,” replied George. “I hardly know myself, what about. Perhaps I might better say I was wondering than thinking.”

“Well, then, what were you wondering about?”

“I was thinking how easily I might plunge into that water, and how quickly life would be quenched; and I was wondering what then?”

“Have you never learned from the Bible how to answer that question?”

“Yes,—in a general way; but it seems easier to dream and wonder than it does to apply Bible truth to one’s own case.”

“No doubt it is easier, but is it as safe?”

“I suppose not,” replied George with careless indifference.

“Why, don’t you know that nothing else can guide us through life, or fit us for eternity?”

“It was about eternity I was just wondering. As to this life, I have not quite made up my mind what is the best course. I haven’t much fear about that,” said he, laughing.

“George,” replied Richard, earnestly, “this is not a subject to be treated lightly. I tell



you, as long as you are indifferent to the truths of the Bible, you have nothing upon which you can place any sure hopes, either for this life or for that which is to come."

"Why, my father has always made out very well, and yet I never heard him say a syllable about the Bible."

"But look within yourself, George. Let me ask you one question. Are you satisfied?"

"Satisfied! With what?"

"With any thing. With your present position or attainments, or prospects, or with yourself?"

"No; indeed I am not," replied George,—laying aside his assumed indifference, and speaking as if he meant what he said.

"Do you ever expect to be satisfied?" continued Richard.

"Yes, some time, when I have accomplished my purposes. I am determined to reach a high position; and when I have attained that, I think I shall be satisfied."

"Do you think so," said Richard, seriously. "Well, suppose you will be satisfied then—are you sure of reaching that position?"

"I suppose not; but then it is my belief that perseverance can overcome almost any

obstacle, and energy can place a person in almost any situation he may choose."

"If you observe carefully, you will find you are mistaken. Circumstances, wholly unlooked for, may overwhelm your best laid schemes and wither all your hopes; and it is only when a person learns to recognise the overruling hand of Providence in all the events of life, and to extract from them the best lessons of patience and hope, and whatever else God may design to teach him, that he is truly independent of adverse circumstances. Such a person may be sure of attaining his end; for every event of his life is ordered by Providence for the fulfilment of that end, which is the formation of a well-developed Christian character. If wealth will favour that end, God will give wealth; but if poverty, then God will give it. But oh, how much study and how much faith it requires to understand such discipline, and receive all with the meekness of a little child. But I fear, George, if your plans are formed without reference to the teachings of the Bible, you will find, sooner or later, that the God of providence can thwart you in more ways than you can conceive; or else you will find, that, while he gives you the desire of your heart,

your soul will perish under the fearful penalty of eternal death."

Richard paused, wondering at the length to which his excited feelings had carried him. He looked into the face of his companion, expecting to see there the expression of half-concealed scorn, at least, if not to be met with words of ridicule. But he was mistaken. The quiet of the place, the calm hush of nature, the placid water, the solitude, the reflections into which they had fallen, all conspired to add power to Richard's words ; and George, so far from scorning the truths he had uttered, was listening to the echoes of his own heart, which responded to their utterance.

Richard had paused some moments, but George did not answer. He felt encouraged to go further and asked—

"What if you should succeed to the full measure of your highest hopes, do you feel sure that you would then be satisfied?"

"I don't know. I have not tried it."

"But you have tried some things, and some things, too, that once appeared as bright and inviting as the career of manhood now does ; and I know I should be safe in saying that you have been disappointed."

“Yes : I have been.”

“And you will always find it so. That which you most depend upon will turn to ashes in your grasp, if you live for this life only.”

“Why, how do you know? You are not much older than I am.”

“I know because the Bible teaches me so, and because I have found even by my own brief experience, how much higher and more satisfying even earthly hopes and plans become when formed under the influence of the gospel. There is another thing to be considered, though, which you know as well as I. That is, that death may cut off all your hopes long before they are realized. No one can help thinking, sometimes, of the nearness of death.”

“I suppose not,” replied George, with half a sigh ; “at least, I can’t. I do think, Richard, —though, perhaps, you would suppose I never did.”

“But your thinking will be all to no purpose unless you have knowledge to guide you ; and that knowledge you will find only in the Bible.”

“Well, maybe you are right ; but I have always had a notion that, if a person thinks so much about death and eternity, he must make

up his mind to sacrifice all the interests of the present life; and I am afraid I couldn't do that."

"Your notion is altogether a mistaken one. The Bible says, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' The interests of the present life are looked upon in a different light, and often that which other people regard as of the first importance, sinks to a much lower place in the estimation of a Christian. And, after all, no one enjoys so much of the good things of this life as a Christian may."

"That isn't according to my idea," replied George. "I'm sure if I were a Christian, I could not be half so eager in the pursuit of pleasure, ease and honour as I could otherwise be."

"Are those the only good things of this life? What is to be said of those dispositions of heart the Bible commends, together with peace of conscience and the hope of eternal life? My father has always taught me that these are, in reality, the good things of this life, and we have God's promise that if we seek first these things, all other things will be



added unto us. His promise is a far more sure dependence than all your perseverance and energy can ever be."

These were considerations that had never before been pressed upon the mind of George Hastings, and, for a time, they seemed to have some force. But all his early training had been directed to produce an entirely different state of mind, and the power of his old habits of thinking soon returned. He looked forward to the brilliant career for which his talents fitted him, and for which his father had carefully nursed his ambition and pride, and the crown beyond the grave seemed dim in comparison with that earthly crown of honour he hoped and aspired to wear; dim—because he had not the eye of faith with which to discern its ineffable brightness.

After a long silence, during which both the young men had been pursuing their own meditations, George exclaimed—

"I'm afraid I cannot go along with you, Richard,—at least, not quite yet. I should have to change the whole plan and purpose of my life."

"Might you not better change it, if you have not chosen the best course?"

“You must first convince me that I have not,” said George, rising and taking up his fishing implements.

The two young men went home, and Richard sat down in his room alone. His thoughts turned to his friend; and earnest desires were awakened that George might be brought to a knowledge of the truth, and be enabled to judge rightly as to his best interests, and to apply himself diligently to secure them. He resolved to endeavour to induce George to read the Bible with him. The next time they met, he proposed such a course of reading, and obtained a reluctant consent. They sat down together, and Richard read and re-read, selecting those passages that always had the most influence upon his own mind; but found, to his sorrow, that the only result seemed to be that George was becoming intellectually acquainted with the contents of the sacred volume, and he was forced to feel that, as the Scriptures say, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.”

Richard’s efforts and prayers for the conversion of his friend, might be considered as the commencement of his labour of preaching the gospel. There are other methods of preaching Christ besides in sermons; and the

force of example and conversation, accompanied with secret prayer, is probably among the most efficient of all methods. His time was much occupied with his daily duties, and his deep interest for his friend filled up many of his leisure moments. If, now and then, his heart travelled back to the log cabin where he had lived so happy a life, and if he sighed for its religious influence and its quiet domestic love, yet the sadness was quickly dissipated by turning his thoughts to the great interests of his present life, and he betook himself to the earnest discharge of duty.

His labour of love for his friend, was not without effect. The seed of the kingdom, sown bountifully and watered with the dews of heavenly grace, at length sprung up; and, about the commencement of the second year of his student-life, he enjoyed the blessed satisfaction of seeing George sit beside him at the table of their common Lord! From that time, their friendship for each other was founded upon a different basis. Their hopes and pursuits and experience were one; and many a time Richard felt himself greatly stimulated to Christian duty by the ardour of his companion.

Richard hoped from the time that George

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first declared his purpose to serve the Lord, that he would choose to serve him in the ministry. After a few months had passed and George still continued steadfast, Richard proposed the subject to him, and found that it had already been upon his mind. George wrote to his parents, begging them to sanction his wishes, but was met with a decided refusal. He was their eldest son, and his father had looked forward to the time when he would take a distinguished place in the literary world, or the world of wealth, (he cared little which;) but that George should become a minister—he could never consent to that!

Mr. Hastings viewed things only in the light of this world. He wrote a long and kind letter to George, setting forth the difficulties he would have to contend with; which, indeed, in days of worldliness and spiritual deadness among Christ's people, are neither few nor small.

It is well for the church that, while many of its members are sunk in worldliness, and while even the majority may be covetous, there are still some to be found who can brave earthly difficulties, who can leave houses and lands, parents and sisters, for that inherit-

ance which Christ has promised to them who do so.

George's purpose was not at all shaken by the representations his father set before him of the difficulties he would have to meet ; but he felt unwilling to pursue any course contrary to his wishes. He, therefore, said no more about it as he expected to visit home a short time before entering college, and he hoped, when at home, to soften his father's opposition.





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CHAPTER X.

PASSING over the interval of time that completed the second year from Richard's entering the academy, we find George Hastings on his way home, whither we will not follow him just now. It will be remembered that he went home with the purpose and expectation of being able to overcome his father's opposition to what had become the desire of his heart,—that he might enter the sacred ministry. Before ascertaining how he succeeded, let us see what use Richard makes of his time.

Richard did not go home, simply because he thought he ought not. It was at that time a long and expensive journey, and he felt bound to deny those promptings of affection which, if they had been obeyed, would have speedily carried him to the old home. Three months were to elapse before he could enter college, and he felt the necessity of doing whatever he could during that time, to provide himself with

means for prosecuting his studies. The end of the three months found him in possession of thirty dollars,—a large sum for him. In those three months, he saw and felt a little of the rough-and-tumble of real life, but it was a good discipline for him, and he learned some things that he might otherwise have never known.

When he and George met again it was at college. Richard eagerly sought an opportunity of inquiring what was the result of his visit home, and whether his cherished purpose of becoming a minister of the gospel was to be carried out.

“No, Richard,” he replied, “I have changed my mind entirely.”

Richard looked up with wonder, and gazed into his friend’s countenance as if he desired to find some expression there that would explain; but George had settled his features into a very plain, unmistakeable, matter-of-fact expression, and Richard could only exclaim:—

“George, what can you mean?”

“I mean precisely what I said. Why, what makes you look so?”

“What has changed your mind so completely?”

“Well, it’s just this way. I went home,

you know, with the full determination to leave no method untried for obtaining my father's permission. But he has had a good deal of experience, and he has placed the matter before me in a somewhat different light. In the first place, I don't think I could ever have obtained his consent, and I could not do any thing contrary to his wishes."

"Did you try faithfully?" asked Richard.

"Why, yes, I tried. I commenced plying him with questions almost as soon as I reached home; but he took the matter very coolly, and put me off from time to time, till one day we had a long talk, and, I think, examined both sides of the question, and the result was that I changed my mind. Father stated so many difficulties to me, and brought so many arguments in favour of some other profession, that I gave up. But don't judge me too harshly, Richard. The main thing that made me change my purpose was that father convinced me I could do just as much good in some other way. He did not oppose my being a Christian and throwing all my influence on the side of religion, but he persuaded me I could do all that just as well, without being a minister."

"Just as well?" asked Richard. "Is it

reasonable to suppose that, with your mind and time occupied with the business of the world, as much as they must necessarily be, you can exert that direct influence for the cause of your Redeemer that you could if you were to give yourself up wholly to the work of building up his kingdom in the world?"

"Why, perhaps not quite. But isn't it true that the world needs more devoted Christians in the common walks of business?"

"Undoubtedly. But what reason have you to suppose that you can resist the temptations of the world, any better than others who have been overcome by them?"

"Ah, well, I see you think I have done wrong. But I'll tell you, plainly, Richard," said George, in an under tone, as if he did not half wish to be heard, "I dreaded being poor."

"That is just what I feared. I feared from the first moment that I knew your resolution, that it was the temptation of riches that had overcome you."

"Well, now, Richard, anybody would rather be rich than poor. It's the most natural thing in the world. Who wouldn't?"

"I have read of one that wouldn't," replied Richard, solemnly. "I have read of One 'who,



though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.' ”

“But that was different. I know what you mean. But he had a special work to accomplish, and a special reason for choosing poverty.”

“True ; but if he became poor for us, we surely should be willing to become poor for him, if he requires it. ‘Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.’ This is the Saviour’s promise.”

“But you don’t think it wrong for Christians to be rich ?”

“Not at all. Far from it. But yet riches may become a great snare to them, and those who find their earthly possessions, or hopes, standing between them and the way of duty, and who therefore are willing to forsake them, may claim the Saviour’s promise.”

“But then, Richard, you seem to forget that I intend to exert all the religious influence I possibly can, if I don’t become a minister.”

“I do not forget it, but I greatly fear you are deceiving yourself.”



“Heigho!” said George, despairingly. “Well, I have promised my father I would study law, and if you would only do the same, Richard, you have powers of mind that would bring you out brilliantly. You will never be appreciated in the pulpit—never; and you must know you will always be hampered with poverty. I told you plainly, it’s a sacrifice of self-interest that I do not believe you are bound to make.”

Richard made no reply, for he felt that it would be useless, and perhaps improper for him to urge George to re-consider his resolution, when he had already pledged himself to his father that he would abandon the course he had at first chosen. Yet he felt inexpressibly grieved. In looking forward to his college career, nothing had given him so much pleasure as the confident expectation that George Hastings would bear him company; but now, although they were to be together, their sympathies, their aims, their hopes, were no longer one.

He was really attached to George, and this attachment had become greatly strengthened since their intercourse with each other had been hallowed by a common devotion to the cause of one Master. He believed still that the vital spark of grace had been kindled in the heart of

his companion, though, like many other youthful disciples, he had been turned aside from the path his Master would have opened for him, by the deceitful snare of worldliness, and had resolved to enter upon a career that would necessarily lead him into many snares and temptations.

Richard went to his room, and seated himself in an attitude of despondency, and pondered upon his present position, and future prospects. A sense of loneliness and friendlessness came over him. Not that George's friendship for him had abated, but he felt deserted by the companion with whom he had hoped and expected to stand side by side in the same great warfare.

The temptation of worldliness was one which had never been presented in its full force to Richard's mind, in consequence of the manner in which he had been trained. He thought over the conversation that had occurred between himself and his friend, and the more he thought the more he lost sight of those great and glorious considerations that had led him to choose the ministry as the field of his labour, and the more bright and alluring the world appeared. The tempter was busy at his heart,

and he, alas ! was laying himself more and more completely open to the assault. There is a strong feeling in every heart, that rebels against the denial of unsanctified self, and this feeling which had so long been kept dormant by the peculiar mode of instruction he had been under, now sprung up in full vigour, and the expression George had used, that he had sufficient power of mind to bring him out brilliantly, passed and repassed his mind, and each time he was more fully persuaded of its truth. He asked himself, “Why cannot Christian graces, and peace of conscience, and the communion and fellowship of God be enjoyed, even in the midst of worldly business, and why may not I, as well as other Christians, seek the wealth and honour of this world, along with the higher interests of eternity?”

At length, lost in a maze of perplexities, he betook himself to the best refuge, and throwing himself upon his knees, he prayed earnestly for direction. He rose, and opened his Bible, and, among other passages, read :—“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone

astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The man of sorrows stood before him; he who had borne the burden of our sins—he who has made our peace with God, and seemed to ask of him, "Wilt thou also go away?" and his heart, melted and subdued, responded, "Lord, to whom can I go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Richard's purpose was not shaken, but established by the temptation he had encountered, and with a strengthened determination, he renewed his dedication of himself to the great work to which his Master had called him.

He felt especially humbled when he remembered how much effect George's flattery had upon him. Never before had he felt so much gratitude for parental instruction. Never had he so deeply felt the necessity of steadfastness in a course of duty, and while he thanked God that by the strength of those firm and unwavering principles which had been implanted in him, and kept in exercise by the grace of God, he had been enabled to resist the temptation which assailed him, and to overcome both outward and inward foes, he also learned more



deeply, to distrust himself, and to feel his entire dependence, moment by moment, upon the sustaining grace of God.

Richard could not help contrasting his own feelings with those of his friend, and thinking that if George had been blessed with the same kind of training he had enjoyed, the tendency of which had been to make him firm in every good purpose, and resolute in encountering and overcoming obstacles, his decision would probably have been very different. At the same time he was not puffed up with self-conceit, for he remembered that the arrow of the tempter had, for a time, rankled in the same spot in his own heart, and he felt his need of the injunction, "Be not high-minded, but fear."





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CHAPTER XI.

To accompany Richard through the remaining years of his life, as a student, would be neither interesting, nor to our purpose. Three years were passed in college, during which he met with the same temptations to sin that always beset youth in such situations; and he encountered many difficulties, too, but the temptations and difficulties were all met with the same resolute and unshrinking spirit, and the same dependence upon divine grace, that had already carried him so far safely on in his career.

In his course of study, though not making a brilliant scholar, nor attracting much notice by his talents, yet by faithfulness and energy, he mastered the subjects he studied, and in the end, outstripped many of those who had given brighter promise. The one thing that sustained him, was the expectation and hope with

which he looked forward to that labour for which he felt every moment must be spent in diligent preparation. To have his mind well-furnished with knowledge, and his powers under control, and trained to efficient service, he felt to be of the first importance, in order that he might be useful as a preacher of the gospel.

George Hastings stood side by side with him during his college course. George was a brilliant scholar, and his ambition and thirst for knowledge carried him through his course with high honours. But did he grow in grace? Outwardly he maintained a good profession, but the goal upon which his eye was fixed was of the "earth, earthy;" and the brilliancy of that career to which he looked forward, it is to be feared, guided and lured him onward, while the purer and holier radiance that shines around the path of the humble disciple of Jesus, had little attraction for his dazzled and bewildered vision.

At the end of three years, George and Richard parted, and each returned to his home. We cannot now pursue George Hastings' history, but is it not too legibly written in the lives of many of the sons of the church? He

hopes to serve his heavenly Master, yet he clings to Mammon, and in the end, serves his earthly master best.

Let us now accompany Richard once more to his humble but happy home. Five years have passed since he left it, and we may expect to find some changes. But can it be that this is the spot where the Summervilles first reared their domestic altar in the West? The surrounding scenery is the same in its general aspect, but comfortable dwellings dot the landscape, and "clearings" are already discernible even amid the thickest of the forest. The roads are greatly improved, and best of all, a neat church and school-house have been reared, not far from his father's dwelling.

The house formerly occupied by the Lees, is in a very different condition from that in which we last found it. The fences are repaired, a new porch has taken the place of the old one, a new coat of paint and the training of some luxuriant vines about the house, have given it quite a different appearance. The grove is cleared of its former occupants, and the shadow of the trees lies fresh and dark upon the bright green grass.

We seek in vain for the log cabin of the Summervilles. It has given place to a new and tasteful farm-house, surrounded by every indication of ease and comfort. Fine trees are growing up around the dwelling; the ugly rail fence has been displaced by a neat paling, and the luxuriant fields, stretching all around, tell of the prosperity of the owner. The farm is all paid for, and Mr. Summerville has lived to see the accomplishment of his desire respecting his children, and to surround himself with the comforts and enjoyments of life.

We no sooner get within doors, than we feel at home. We recognise here and there a familiar old piece of furniture, and the same neatness and care are impressed upon every thing.

Richard finds his father unchanged, save that the quick eye of affection may trace a somewhat thicker sprinkling of gray among his locks; but he is still the same wise and loving father. There is the same gentle and quiet beaming of affection in his mother's eye, and she welcomes him home with the same kind voice that had taught him from his childhood. He had left Maggie almost a child, and the sweet grace of

childhood had always lingered around the image of his sister, but he finds her clothed with a sweeter grace of early womanhood, and respect mingles with his ardent love for the companion of his early years.

Richard himself has doubtless changed more than they all. The boyish timidity and rustic manner have given place to a manly bearing and a polished exterior. He is still the same affectionate son and brother, though a change far greater than the outward one has taken place within; and he can hardly recognise himself as the same individual that, with so much shrinking and trembling of heart, started out into the world from the paternal roof five years before.

The occasion of Richard's visit home was also the occasion of his sister's marriage. A family of good character, of energy, of Christian principles, has taken possession of the place formerly occupied by the Lees, and into that household Maggie is about to be received as a daughter and sister. If Richard could have had the choosing of the hand that was to receive his sister's, he could not have suited himself better. That in which he most rejoiced was that he was a Christian, and that the hal-



lowed light of religion would settle on their abode, wherever they might find it. "The entrance of thy word giveth light," whether to the heart, or to the home.

Happy days were those, filled with quiet pleasures that leave so bright a page in the heart's history!

Maggie and her husband were to remain at home with her parents; and when Richard again took his leave, it was with a feeling of satisfaction that he left a brother to take his place.

And here commences another page of Richard's history; but it is one which, if fully recorded, would bring into view too many topics that are not well suited to the class of readers for whom this story is designed. His difficulties in respect to pecuniary matters were over. His father was now quite well able to bear his expenses entirely, so that he might devote his time unremittingly to study. But there was a discipline of heart and mind to be carried on of which he had as yet had but little experience. He found a constant effort necessary to keep in active exercise those firm and noble principles for the regulation of his life that a Christian

education had imparted to him. Yet though we do not enter upon the minute details of that progressive discipline by which he was exercised, we may note the carrying out of those upright and straight-forward principles which have thus far distinguished him.

He felt that he was now indeed separated unto the work of the ministry, and that the solicitations of worldly ease and pleasure must be manfully resisted, and every power be brought to bear upon the mastering of the great themes of the gospel. And those maxims his father had taught him, became embodied in that most noble exclamation of the great apostle: "Wherefore, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Before taking final leave of him, let us review his character, and see if it is such as to entitle him to the honour of being called truly INDEPENDENT.

He has struggled hard with adversity; he has toiled nobly through difficulties; circumstances have not conquered him, but he has

overcome them ; and, under the blessing of an overruling Providence, he has compelled them to serve him in the accomplishment of his purposes. He has resisted the force of evil example, and passed uncontaminated and unmoved through many temptations.

Evil companions have not seduced him from the path of rectitude. He has resisted the enticements of false friends, and denied those to whom the ties of a real friendship had bound him, rather than turn aside from his chosen course. And most of all, he has struggled with HIMSELF. He has sought to subdue passion, and every evil thing in his heart, and he has succeeded well, for he has not laboured in his own strength, but in humble dependence upon his God and Saviour.

And you, too, young friend, will meet with difficulties—many, very many. Do they come in the shape of adversity, poverty, toil ? God does not mean them as enemies, yet you may make them so. God sends them to exercise you with a wholesome discipline, by means of which you may be assisted in the way to heaven. Pray that you may understand the teaching, and turn it to good account ; and the

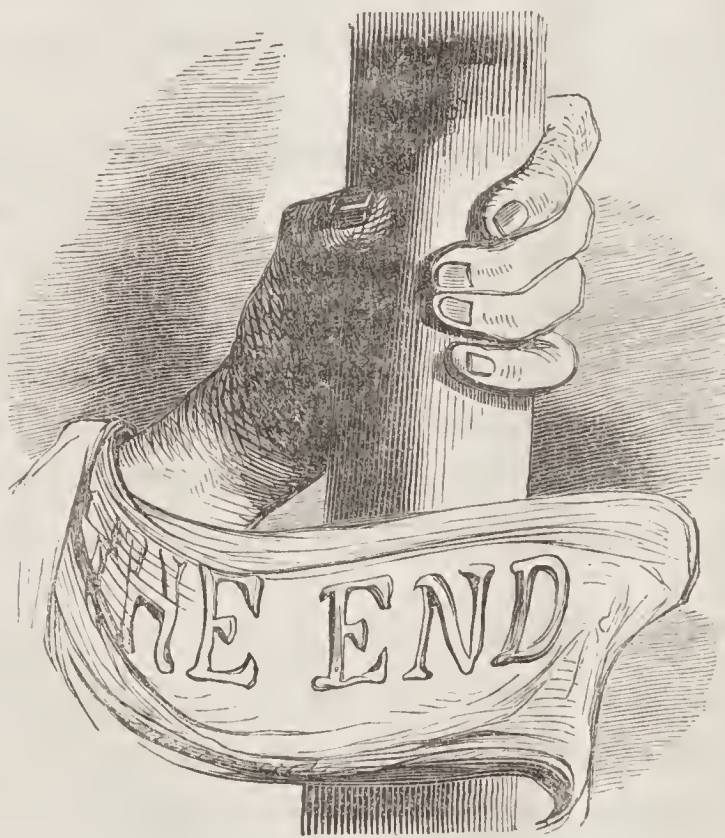
time will come that you will thank God for every step of the way by which you have been led. You will yet see and acknowledge that a Father's hand has guided your steps, and ordered them in infinite love.

Do your difficulties come in the shape of temptations—of evil example from companions, or even of evil precepts from those who should direct your young feet in the ways of righteousness? If you yield, it will be for your eternal undoing. Believe God's word, and "go not in the way of the scorner."

Do your foes arise in your own heart? Yes, there, indeed, and their name is legion! "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Distrust its promptings. Pray for the Spirit of God to guide you. Make his word as a candle, searching the innermost depths of your soul, that you may bring every thought and imagination to Jesus to be purified.

Would you be independent? Struggle against the storms of adversity, against the temptations of prosperity, against the influence of sin in the world around you, and most of all, in the depths of your own heart. Strive, not

in your own might, but seek help from God, and in His strength, you have His never-failing promise, that you shall conquer. Become Christ's servant, and so shall you attain that perfect liberty with which Christ can make you free. THE ONLY TRUE INDEPENDENCE OF THE CREATURE IS HABITUAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD THE CREATOR.



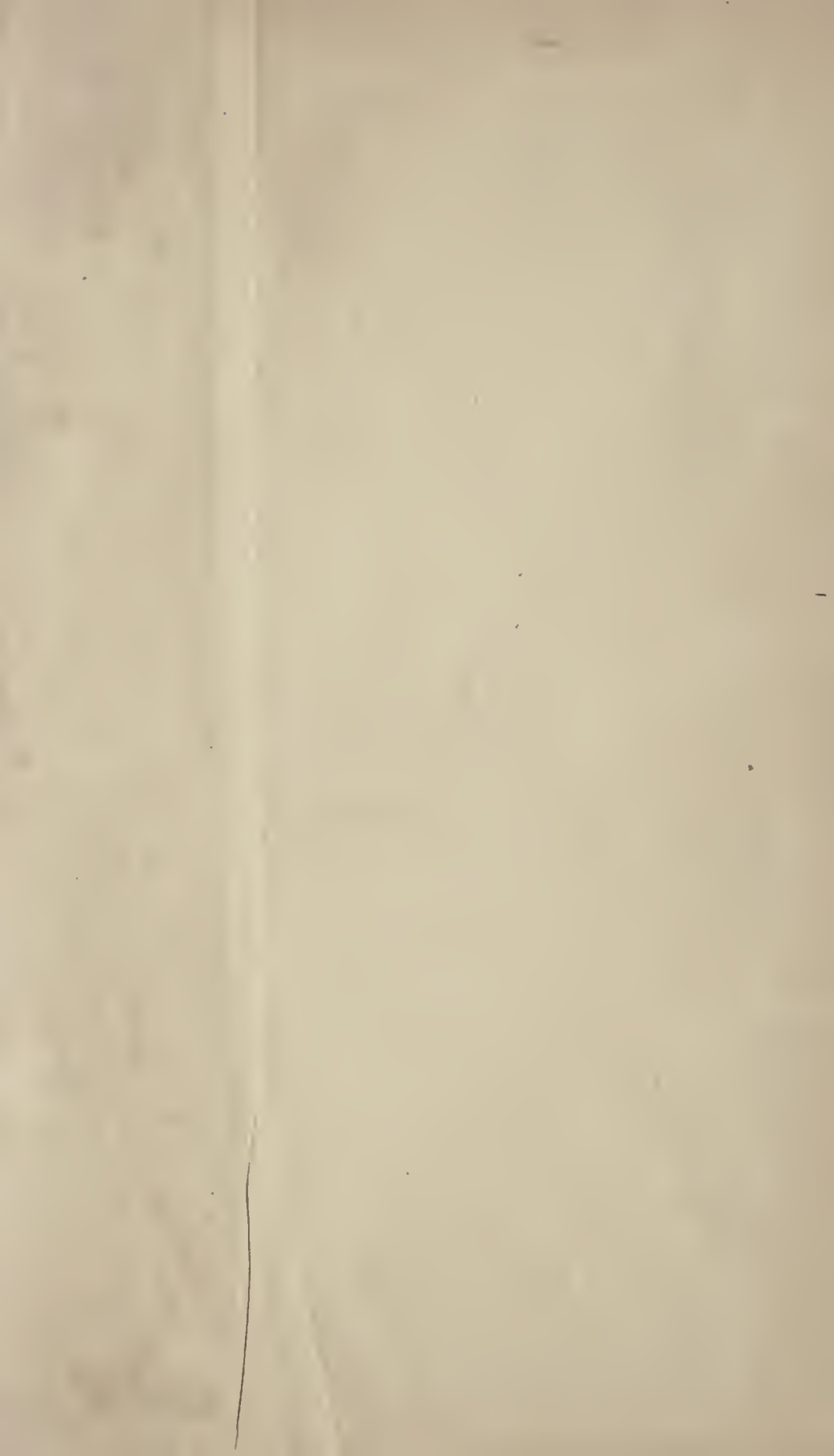














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